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THE HARDMAN
OF AMERICAN
MOTOCROSS

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FOR THE FIRE TO GO AWAY"

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HIS HELMET

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February 2006

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**WHEN THE BEST
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THEY CHOOSE THE *V3* HELMET.**



Features

selection of
his favourite –
and unseen –
shots
from '05

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spring with
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Why Joel Smets is hanging up his helmet

Brian Jorgensen - heading home to Honda

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Pyrhonen -
shooting for
the top 10

Report

Alessi and Facciotti on top in the Millennium Stadium

February

2006

Sully delves into his archives to bring you a selection of the best shots of 2005 that didn't make the cut.

ONE OF the biggest business news headlines in the past few years has been the growing popularity of a new kind of business arrangement called a partnership. The partnership is a legal arrangement in which two or more people share the ownership of a business. It is a very flexible arrangement that can be used in a wide variety of situations. It is often used by small businesses, but it can also be used by large corporations. The partnership is a very important part of the business world, and it is one that is becoming increasingly popular.

There are many reasons why the partnership is so popular. One reason is that it allows people to share the risks of a business. If a business fails, the losses are shared by all the partners. Another reason is that it allows people to pool their resources. If two people each have \$10,000, they can pool their money and start a business with \$20,000. This is a much better way to start a business than if each person had to start a business on their own. The partnership is also a very flexible arrangement. It can be used in a wide variety of situations, and it can be tailored to fit the needs of the partners.

There are many different types of partnerships. The most common type is the general partnership. In a general partnership, all the partners share the management of the business. They all have the right to bind the business to a contract. Another type of partnership is the limited partnership. In a limited partnership, only one partner has the right to bind the business to a contract. The other partners are limited to their investment in the business. There are also other types of partnerships, but these are the two most common.

The partnership is a very important part of the business world, and it is one that is becoming increasingly popular. It is a flexible arrangement that can be used in a wide variety of situations, and it allows people to share the risks of a business. It is a very important part of the business world, and it is one that is becoming increasingly popular.

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When Pit Satre was paralyzed at the 2003 Salopien EP, his KTM team realized that he was as smooth off the track as he was ragged on it – and their continued relationship has been mutually beneficial.

[illegible]

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One of the great arcs in the history of MMA came to an abrupt close last year when Joel Smoak picked up a career-ending injury at the Garden on

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[illegible]

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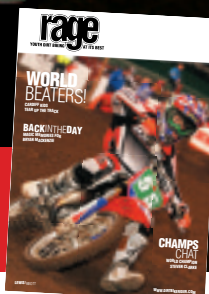
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Comment

WITH MAGAZINE time being slightly different from your normal everyday time, although this is our February issue it's actually our first mag of 2006 so I'll start this month with a big Happy New Year to all our readers!

Personally speaking, there was nothing happy about rolling up at the DBR office on January 2 while the rest of the country was still sleeping off the excesses of the New Year celebrations. After a festive fortnight of hardcore eating and drinking my left leg felt like it was sculpted from duck pate and my swollen internal organs were pushed right up against my ribcage. The party was well and truly over...

Luckily, this is the time to start afresh so I'm drying out and definitely on the road to recovery – and it seems I'm not the only one looking to wipe the slate clean. The big news this month is that Future West have cancelled their Bikesport Live event this coming weekend (January 13-15) at Cardiff's Millennium Stadium. Hardly surprising to be honest. But what is surprising is that FW's head honcho John Hellam and Gareth Hockey of RHL Activities – the company that pulled the plug on the ACU British SX Championship – had a face-to-face meeting just before Christmas.

According to the RHL press release the purpose of the get-together was 'a bid to bring some stability and security' to supercross in this country. What's this? Rival SX promoters actually talking to each other in a civilised manner?

Now brace yourselves for big surprise #2! Before the FW/RHL summit Matt Bates, the man behind the successful Belfast SX, travelled up to Rugby to meet with the ACU's top brass in a separate bid to restore some order to the current British SX scene.

Now that there appears to be some sort of dialogue taking place it's vital that everyone concerned gets together for one big fat meeting to try and thrash out a workable solution. Because if we still end up this autumn with two rival SX series fighting for riders and spectators we'll be back to where we started.

From where I'm sat I reckon there's actually cause for a little bit of optimism. So you never know, despite the catalogue of cock-ups that have ruined the lion's share of another British supercross season there could actually be light at the end of the tunnel.

Sean



Mike Craig in action at December's Cardiff SX

BIKESPORT DEAD!

Future West cancel three-day Bikesport Live event

SUPERCROSS PROMOTERS Future West have pulled the plug on their Bikesport Live event – a three-day fest of two-wheeled action scheduled to run from January 13-15 at the Cardiff Millennium Stadium.

The decision to cancel was made after disappointing ticket sales for Future West's December SX at the Welsh venue.

'After seven days of painful consideration it is with deep regret that Bikesport Live has been cancelled,' states a Future West press release. 'A dramatic drop in attendance at Cardiff has seriously compromised the financial viability of a second motorcycle sports event at the Millennium

Stadium so soon after the December 3 event.'

Bikesport Live was to have been an all-singing, all-dancing motorcycle extravaganza with a bike show – along the lines of Stoneleigh's Dirt Bike Show – coupled with two nights of supercross and one night of freestyle with a sprinkling of road race action thrown in for good measure.

Future West clearly blame the ACU for the failure of their event. 'This drop in spectator attendance can only be attributed to the cancellation of the ACU supercross championship which falsely claimed to be the official British supercross championship,' continues the press release. 'The supercross fiasco aided and abetted by the ACU's failed attempt to take control has without doubt in our minds set the progress of supercross back in the UK considerably.'

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ODYSSEY INDOOR

WITC returns to Belfast for second helpings

BELFAST'S ODYSSEY Arena will once more welcome the stars of the World Indoor Trials Championship as the sixth round of the Repsol-sponsored series returns to Northern Ireland on February 10 after its very successful debut in 2005.

"I couldn't have been happier with the event we staged last year," claims event organiser Matt Bates. "It was our first attempt at indoor trials and we came very close to selling the event out which proved to me the event has wide appeal."

The entry for Belfast sees reigning world champion Adam Raga leading the way on his factory Gas Gas while his Spanish compatriots Albert Cabestany, Jeroni Fajardo and Marc Freixa will also be pushing hard for the win. And Japanese Montesa Honda rider Takahisa Fujinami will be doing his best to beat them all off to take top spot.

The British charge will, as ever, be led by Dougie Lampkin with world junior champ James Dabill taking a wildcard ride alongside exciting Italian Daniele Maurino.

The eight riders will do battle on a mixture of the regular Octagon sections – some of which were seen last year – as well as some locally manufactured obstacles that Irish trials legends Andy Perry and Davy Rodgers of Trialstar are designing and building right now. The final layout of the obstacles will be announced real soon on the event's website www.belfastindoortrial.com which is packed full of pre-event information. You can also purchase tickets for the event through that site or give the Odyssey box office a call on **028 9073 9074** or **0870 243 4455**.

With the event falling just before Valentine's Day – that's February 14 in case you forgot – maybe it's worth whisking your loved one away for a weekend in the wonderful city of Belfast, watching the world trial before dancing the night away in one of the Odyssey's many bars or night clubs.



Main: Spaniard Albert Cabestany will be hoping to put his Sherco on top at the Odyssey
Left: Former outdoor world champ Takahisa Fujinami will be in action in Ireland

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**Cover: James Stewart
doubles up in Canada
as SX GP kicks off...
(Steve Cox)**
**Contents main image:
...while at the other end
of the SX spectrum
Geoff Walker hangs on
for dear life!
(Sutty)**

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ROMANIACS!

Sign up for masochist marathon

THE RED Bull Romaniacs Enduro Rallye is a relatively new event on the extreme enduro calendar but it's already earned the reputation of being the toughest and hardest.

Starting with a special stage in the Romanian capital of Bucharest then followed up by approximately 1,300km of extreme riding in the following six days, you'd have to be some kind of masochistic fool to even contemplate attempting this challenge.

But if you are wired up wrong and you do fancy a crack at this event (like our very own tag-team of

much dumbassery – that's Sully and Wakker) you'll be glad to know that registration is now open for the 2006 event that runs from August 13-19.

By typing www.redbullromaniacs.com into your internet browser you'll be able to gain access to all the information and application forms you'll ever need as well as video footage and photographic evidence of the atrocities you'll endure if you decide to give it a go.

There are four separate classes – Pro, Team, Hobby and Quad – but with entries being somewhat tight and filling up fast it's probably a good idea to get a groove on so you can stitch yourself up for a week of pain in Romania.



BOLTER BOOST!

Daryl signs full-factory deal

WHILE SOME of Britain's more well-known enduro riders have turned their backs on the World Enduro Championship, 21-year-old Wiltshireman Daryl Bolter is all set for a flat-out assault on the 2006 E2 championship with full-factory backing from Husqvarna.

Daryl – who came third in the 2005 European Junior Enduro Championships for Mucci Racing – will be stepping up to join the official CH Racing Husqvarna Enduro Team and will be riding

two-stroke WR250s throughout the year.

Bolter's already picked up a production 2006 WR250 from Husky Sport to help build his fitness over the winter in preparation for the move to the bigger and more powerful E2 bikes compared to the 125cc stroker he campaigned in '05.

"I'm extremely pleased to be able to stay with Husqvarna and to move to the full-factory team," reckons Daryl. "What's even more pleasing is that I'm able to continue my relationship with Rangers Peugeot and Husky Sport – without both of whom my career would not have gone so far."

GP TEAM UPDATE

IF YOU just can't wait until the first GP of the year at Zolder to see who's riding what then here's the up-to-date list of 2006 MX GP teams and riders.

Stefan Everts gets Cedric Melotte back as sidekick from MX2 as Brian Jorgensen returns to Martin Honda. KTM get a complete new team with Sebastien Tortelli, Mickael Pichon and Jonathan Barragan while Steve Ramon replaces the retired Joel Smets at Geboers Suzuki and Stephen Sword steps up from MX2 for De Groot Kawasaki.

Ken De Dycker, Pascal Leuret and Julien Bill are all new to the UK scene for CAS, Multitek and Bike-it while Gordon Crockard returns to Honda with Wulfsport and Erik Eggens reappears on Kawasaki in his brother's team.

KTM are out to regain the title in MX2 with four potential winners in Tyla Rattray, Marc De Reuver, David Philippaerts and Carl Nunn. De Carli Yamaha have signed Matteo Bonini as new sidekick to champion Tony Cairoli and no-one can count out Christophe Pourcel who's now in the Belgian-based Gepa team with brother Sebastien.

Kenneth Gundersen and Antoine Meo drop down from MX1 for Ricci Yamaha and Martin Honda and Britain finds yet another generation of kids with Tommy Searle, Elliott Banks-Browne and Scott Probert joining Jason Dougan and Shaun Simpson at the line.

MX1

Rinaldi Yamaha: Stefan Everts (B) Cedric Melotte (B)
Red Bull KTM: Sebastien Tortelli (F) Mickael Pichon (F) Jonathan Barragan (E)

Geboers Suzuki: Steve Ramon (B) Kevin Stribos (B)
De Groot Kawa: Tanel Leok (Est) Stephen Sword (GB)
TM: Antti Pyrhonen (SF)

CAS Honda: Josh Coppins (NZ) Ken De Dycker (B)

Martin Honda: Brian Jorgensen (DK) Garcia Vico (E)

RWJ Honda: James Noble (GB)

Multitek Honda: Pascal Leuret (F)

Shineray Honda: Marvin Van Daele (B)

Wulfsport Honda: Gordon Crockard (IRL)

Bike-it Yamaha: Julien Bill (CH) Martin Barr (IRL)

Van Beers Yamaha: Manuel Priem (B)

Sarholz KTM: Wyatt Avis (SA) Michael Staufer (A)

MX Shop KTM: Jonny Lindhe (S) Roman Morozov (Rus)

MTM Suzuki: Danny Theybers (B)

Kurz Suzuki: Kornel Nemeth (H) Lauris Freibergs (LV)

Delta Suzuki: Josef Dobes (CZ) Alex Salvini (I)

Eggens Kawasaki: Erik Eggens (NL) Bas Verhoeven (NL)

Medei Kawasaki: Claudio Federici (I) Luca Cherubini (I)

MotoXtreme Kawasaki: Mark Hucklebridge (GB)

MX2

Champ KTM: Tyla Rattray (SA) Marc De Reuver (NL)

David Philippaerts (I) Carl Nunn (GB)

De Carli Yamaha: Antonio Cairoli (I) Matteo Bonini (I)

Ricci Yamaha: Chicco Chiodi (I) Davide Guarneri (I)

Kenneth Gundersen (N)

Bike-it Yamaha: Billy MacKenzie (GB)

Casola Yamaha: Anthony Boissiere (F) Xavier Boog (F)

Van Beers Yamaha: Algar Leok (Est)

JK Yamaha: Luigi Seguy (F) Jeremy Tarroux (F)

Loic Leonce (F)

Orangina Yamaha: Mickael Maschio (F)

Sarholz KTM: Max Nagl (D) Markus Schiffer (D)

Silver Action KTM: Rui Goncalves (P) Manuel Monni (I)

RFME KTM: Carlos Campano (E)

Gepa Kawasaki: Christophe Pourcel (F) Sebastien

Pourcel (F) Greg Aranda (F)

Molson Kawasaki: Gareth Swanepoel (SA) Tom Church

(GB) Tommy Searle (GB)

Bayle Kawasaki: Nicolas Aubin (F)

Martin Honda: Antoine Meo (F)

SRS Honda: Patrick Caps (B) Matti Seistola (SF)

RWJ Honda: Jason Dougan (GB)

Elliott Banks-Browne (GB)

Wulfsport Honda: Shaun Simpson Scott Probert (GB)

No matter what
handicap's handed
out Knighter will still
be the man to beat



BIGGER! BETTER! TOUGHER!

Hardcore head to Nantmawr

THE TOUGH One. Sounds like one of the 15 separate steak variations that's available – with or without a sauce of your choice – at your local boil-in-the-bag-or-just-deep-fry-it-until-it's-brittle restaurant with an obligatory children's play park attached on the side. But it's not!

This Tough One is Britain's premier two-hour extreme hare scramble that's set to take place real soon – January 21 – at Nantmawr Quarry near Oswestry. At 4pm 60-odd of Britain's finest motocross, enduro, trials and hare scramble riders will line up to take their shot at winning a slice of the two-and-a-half grand prize fund that's up for offers.

The late start is designed so at least one-third of the event will be run in the dark. Most of the more extreme sections – like the tyres, logs and the 'root-of-all-evil' – will be floodlit but much of the going will be in t'pitch black, making good lights a necessity for all racers and possibly spectators too.

David Knight has to start as favourite to win. Knighter dominated this event and many more like it in 2005 but as well as the other competitors

Knighter has to battle against a handicap that should give the competition a good head start on the Manxman. He may have to start one lap down, two laps down, change two tyres before he starts or run and fetch his bike as the rest of the Pro class blast away from the start. Only on the day will Knighter and his fellow competitors know exactly how far behind the factory KTM rider will start.

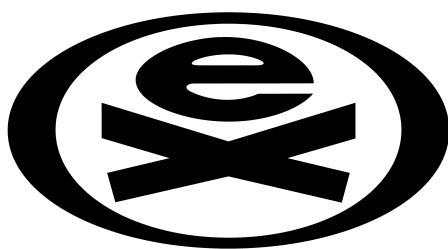
It should definitely be an event worth watching. With last year's action-packed race proving to be highly entertaining the '06 running of the Tough One will be every bit as exciting. Spectator entry fees have been frozen at last year's prices ensuring watching Britain's best won't cost the earth. With a parking fee of just £20 per car or £5 a motorcycle the WOR crew hope to encourage spectators to take their mates to what promises to be a great day out.

Nantmawr Quarry will be well signposted from the A483 Welshpool to Oswestry road at Llynclys. From there it is simply a case of following the brown Nantmawr Quarry signs that lead you straight to the event. For more information on this event and all other Wirral Off Road promotions check out www.wirraloffroad.com



AIR RAISERS!

SOUTH SOMERSET MXC have really done their bit this past year when it comes to raising money for the Devon and Somerset Air Ambulance. The club recently handed over a cheque for a whopping £1150 – £300 of which was raised by auctioning one of Billy MacKenzie's Fox race shirts at the club's presentation evening.



I **DON'T** think my life would be complete if it wasn't for Google. While doing a bit of 'research' on t'internet I came across some facts about February and apparently it's the Gregorian calendar that dictates that February is the second month of the year as well as the shortest.

Some bloke named after my local – Julius Caesar – made it 29 days once but it was Augustus (another Roman emperor) who took the extra day off February and gave it to August, the month he had named after himself.

While searching I also found out that the 2006 IFMXF Night of the Jumps series kicks off in Mannheim this very February and as if by chance the Extreme Sports Channel are bringing you all the highlights from the 2005 series. Mat 'The Hamburger' Rebeaud nicks the win in Hamburg then takes a (far from) close shave in Cologne on the way to his title. Don't miss a gear change! February 23 at 7:30pm. **Stuart Clapp**

SALMINEN HONoured

FINNISH OFF-road legend Juha Salminen was recently named GNCC Rider of the Year. The award has special meaning as it's not automatically presented to the rider who wins the series but instead given to the guy who collects most votes from his peers at the GNCC presentation banquet.

Juha also collected a championship ring and trophy commemorating his amazing first AMA off-road season as well as being presented with the GNCC National #1 plate – even though he received one when he wrapped up his season at round 12 in Clairsville, Ohio.

The KTM rider dominated the series in his first year of AMA competition which in turn also earned him the 2005 AMA Sports Athlete of the Year title which has been won in the past by greats including Ricky Carmichael.

"This is a great honour for me," says Juha. "I now have received the AMA Sports Athlete of the Year and the GNCC Rider of the Year. I came to the States to win and with the help of my mechanic Antti Kallonen [who once signed for Roy Emerson's Yamaha team before picking up a career-ending ankle injury] and the KTM Off-Road team I have been able to succeed. I know that the American off-road riders will be after me and I'm prepared. I'm looking forward to next year."

MAX POWER!

THE ACU are pleased as punch to announce that Midlands-based telecommunications company Maximum Solutions have stepped up to become title sponsor of the MMX championship series for 2006 after supporting the sidecar series for the last couple of years.

The MMX championship is the collective name for the British four-stroke, Under 21, sidecarcross and quad series. For more details on these exciting championships check out www.mmx.org.uk

MMX championship

2006 SERIES SCHEDULE

- March 26** – Whiteway Barton, Devon (four-stroke, U21 and sidecars)
- April 17** – Asham Woods, Somerset (four-stroke, U21 and sidecars)
- May 7** – Hawkstone Park, Shropshire (four-stroke, U21, sidecars and quads)
- June 25** – Dean Moor, Cumbria (four-stroke, U21, sidecars and quads)
- July 9** – Asham Woods, Somerset (sidecars and quads)
- July 16** – Pontrilas, Herefordshire (four-stroke, U21, sidecars and quads)
- July 30** – Bampton, Cumbria (four-stroke, U21 and sidecars)
- August 6** – Blaxhall Pits, Suffolk (four-stroke, U21, sidecars and quads)
- October 1** – Torrington, Devon (four-stroke, U21 and sidecars)



**U21 contender
Lewis Gregory**

Hawkstone will be one of the last chances to catch Stefan Everts in action in Britain



SWAN SONG

Everts makes farewell appearance at Hawkstone

STEFAN EVERTS will kick off his final season of top-flight motocross when he heads the entry at this year's Hawkstone Park International MX.

The record-breaking nine-time world champion – who's hoping to end his illustrious career with title #10 this season – will make his farewell appearance at the Shropshire venue on March 5.

Everts, a regular visitor to Hawkstone for the biggest pre-season international on the calendar, finished second in the MX1 class last year to Joel Smets. And while Smets' retirement puts him out of the equation this doesn't mean Everts is in for an easy time.

The big challenges to the Belgian come from a two-pronged French attack in the shape of

former world champs Mickael Pichon and Sebastien Tortelli and Kiwi Josh Coppins. Neither Frenchman raced at Hawkstone last year while Coppins crashed out of the opening moto and dislocated his shoulder.

The Everts/Tortelli battle in particular has the potential to be an explosive one with the pair locking horns in Europe on equal capacity machinery for the first time since Seb beat Stefan at the '98 Greek 250cc GP. That win netted Tortelli the world title and he promptly jumped ship to the US where he's been ever since.

There will be plenty of home-grown talent in action in the MX1 class but most interest will centre around Stephen Sword's debut in the division on a factory 450cc Kawasaki.

The MX2 class should be equally hotly contested with British champion Carl Nunn

lining up aboard his factory Champ KTM alongside Bike-it/Dixon Yamaha's '05 GP winner Billy MacKenzie and Molson Kawasaki's red hot prospect Tommy Searle.

For the first time ever public entry tickets and camping bookings are available in advance. To gain express access to the event – or to take advantage of a discounted family ticket (only available in advance) – call **0161 763 6660**. All major credit and debit cards are accepted.

The admission fee includes a full colour programme and free on-site car parking and a new 'park n' pay' system will be used to improve traffic flow into the venue.

Companies who wish to book trade space or discuss sponsorship opportunities should contact G2F on **0161 763 6660**. For further information contact G2F or visit the official event website at **www.hawkstonemx.co.uk**



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BT ON THE BOIL!

THE BIG news at the tail end of last year was '04 MX2 world champ Ben Townley's move Stateside for the '06 season. And isn't it good to see that his switch from 450F factory KTM to 250F Monster Energy/Pro Circuit Kawasaki hasn't dampened down the super-quick Kiwi's enthusiasm! Go get 'em Benny boy...

Photo by Hoppenworld.com



PAUL COOPER

Why Coops is quitting GPs

DAKAR DIARY

Steve Malone's desert storm





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AMA SX X4

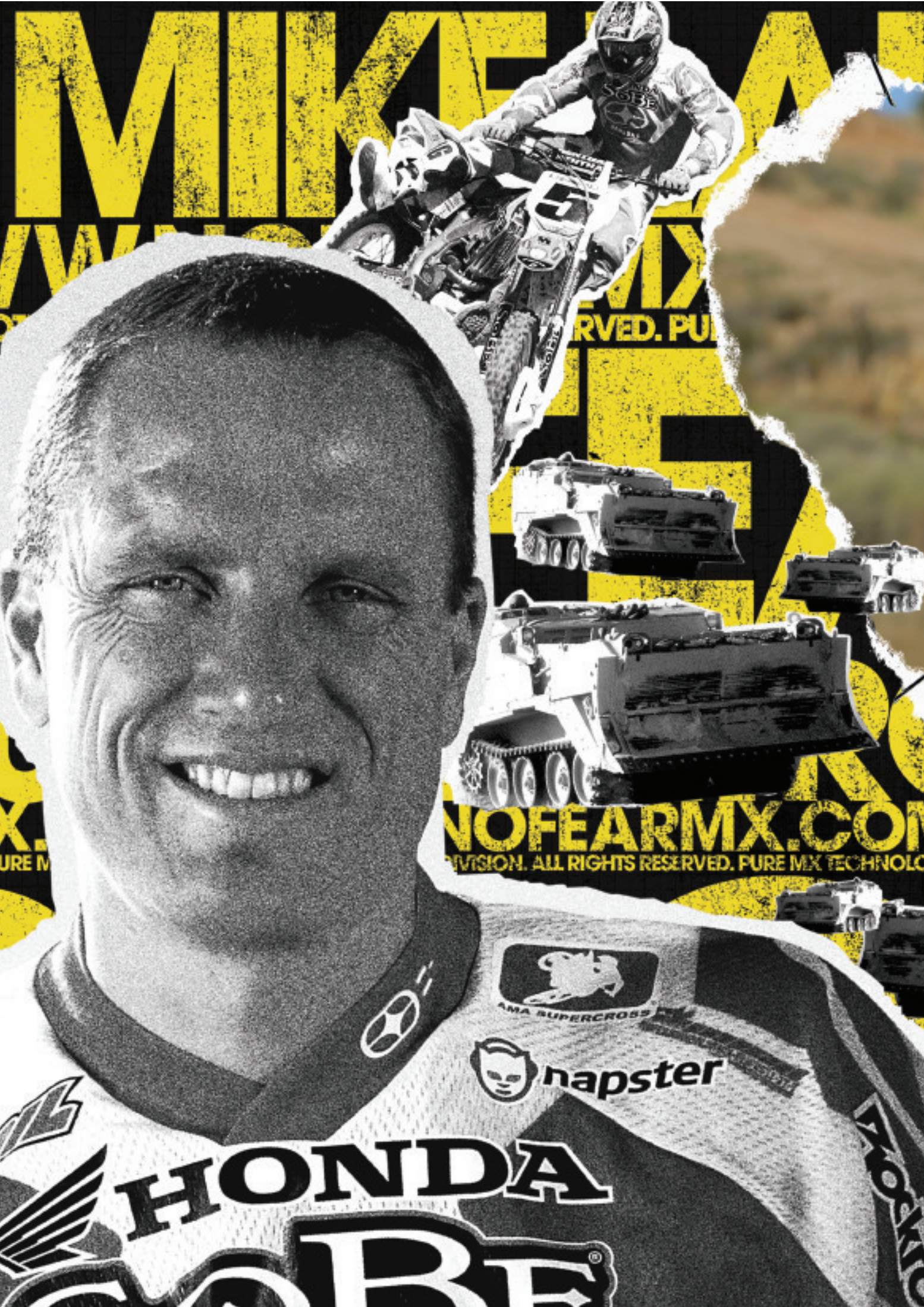
All the action from the opening four rounds of the AMA SX championship

Plus... Wyatt Avis, Sebastien Pourcel, Sheffield Trial, The Tough One, all the regular columns and much, much more random rubbish and tittle tattle!



ON SALE

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"At the moment I'm packing for my US trip and it's a big job as I'm taking a lot with me - stuff like my own suspension and some parts for the bike so it's similar to my bike at home. I'm certainly not looking forward to the excess baggage bill!"

American Dream

While we're all shivering back in Blighty, Steve's soaking up the rays Stateside



HAPPY NEW Year to you all! I don't know about you guys but I've had enough turkey, drink and all the other Christmas treats to last me until next Christmas! I try to eat healthily over the festive period but you can't help yourself when someone offers you a nice cup of hot mulled wine and a mince pie.

I had a really good time - I spent Christmas with my girlfriend's family which was great, then headed up to my home in Scotland for New Year or, should I say, Hogmanay.

On my way up to Scotland I stopped off to watch Manchester United play West Brom at Old Trafford. I was offered the ticket by my next door neighbour and my girlfriend was kind enough to give her ticket to my brother so he was pretty pleased about that. The game was awesome, United scored three goals and the atmosphere was electric - with 67,000 people in one place at the same time you can imagine the noise around the stadium.

After the game I headed on up the M6 to Scotland where I didn't really get up to much - just relaxed and had a quiet one which was good. I drove home to England on New Year's Day - the traffic was almost non-existent so I managed to do the journey in four hours.

The next day it was time to start the training again which isn't always that much fun in the British winter weather - lucky for me then that by the time you read this I'll be getting stuck into three weeks training in America. I've been to the US three times before in January but didn't go last year. A lot of the guys now go away in January - either to the US or the south of Spain, mainly to get the good weather. I certainly feel it works for me to get in three solid weeks of riding - not just for fitness, also for speed.

The tracks over there are normally a lot faster but you also get a lot of jumps at the same time. The way the tracks are now being built in Europe - with whoops and rhythm sections - I reckon time in the States will prepare me well for GPs.

Kawasaki have hooked me up with a bike, spares and all the other stuff I will need to go riding and I'm looking forward to meeting up with some of the US guys so I can see their set-up and maybe learn some stuff from them while I'm there.

I'll also probably get a chance to watch the first supercross which will be great. I'll be rooting for Bubba mainly from a Kawasaki point of view because I know how much effort the Japanese have put into the 450F and how much they're relying on Bubba doing the business this year. But I still think RC is the man and my money's on him.

At the moment I'm packing for my US trip and it's a big job as I'm taking a lot with me - stuff like my own suspension and some parts for the bike so it's similar to my bike at home. I've also got two big kitbags full of riding gear and I'm taking my cycle as well - I'm certainly not looking forward to the excess baggage bill!

Okay, I better sign off for another month - Lawless has got out of his cage and my rabbit's just been on the phone wondering where my column is (hmmm, may have got that bit the wrong way round)!

So, once again, Happy New Year and all the best in '06 - I look forward to seeing you at the races...

Words by Stephen Sword Photo by Suttu



STEPHEN SWORD

*Steve
#1*

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"Usually when I ride it's deadly serious because it's either a race or a test or practice or qualifying and that's all very important and demanding - so to ride for your own fun is great and I think it reminds me of how lucky I am to get to race for a living"



Wulfman!

The New Year signals a new team and new motivation for the new-look Gordon Crockard

HAPPY NEW Year – I can't tell you how much I have been wanting to put 2005 behind me so I can say that!

I'm all red now with new bikes, new team, new mechanic, new boss, new gear, new beginning, new goals, new everything. It's great and I love it!

I will ride production 2006 450 Hondas which will be prepared by a Northern Irish fella called Iain Bishop. He's pretty handy on an MX bike himself so if I get a ladder in my tights or break a nail he's well capable of stepping into my race boots and doing a moto.

The team is now in its second season and was known last year as Team Lizard Honda as the main sponsor was SoBe drinks and their logo features a lizard. See the connection there? Well, SoBe have stepped aside and the title sponsor is now Wulfsport so, surprisingly, the team is now called Team Wulfsport Honda.

The man who runs it is Roger Magee (another Northern Irish citizen) and he also used to race which is great as far as being able to understand exactly what racing is about through the lens of a pair of goggles.

My team-mates are Shaun Simpson and Scott Probert who will contest the British and world championships aboard 250F Hondas. Both guys are younger than me and are bursting with enthusiasm and potentially could make some big results – I'm looking forward to getting some motos put in at the practice track with them. And with Shaun being Scottish and Scott coming from England it could make for some great 'Englishman, Irishman and Scotsman' style joke opportunities!

I've got a house sorted in Belgium and the team will also have a base workshop there too as logistically it's the best place to be.

From Hawkstone on March 5 to the Motocross des Nations at Matterley Basin on September 24 I've got 27 weekends of racing. That's three internationals, the MXdN, 15 GPs including long-haul flyaways to Japan and South Africa and eight British championship rounds which, if you live in Belgium, can become a headache to get to sometimes. I'm not saying I don't want to do the British series because I do, it's just that such a busy schedule can get pretty tough on the mechanics.

All of which leaves just three free weekends but, to be honest, I can't wait – but it's clear to see that you need to be ready because the fast guys won't wait for you if you're off the pace.

Iain and I are travelling to California to practice for three weeks. In the past it has worked well for me and I hope to improve as a rider during our stay there. Once we're back

we'll go straight to Belgium to get in the sand seeing as it will likely be wet then still.

DOMA are making pipes for the team and I'm really pleased about that as I think they make the best pipe for motocross plus they have always been able to give me the correct type of power by the way they make the pipe. DOMA is a Belgian company and we'll spend some time at the factory and on the track testing different systems.

Moto Master are supplying the discs for our brakes and testing will have to be carried out with them to come up with the best option from their range. They are a Dutch company and being based in Belgium now makes things like this much easier.

We have a factory deal with Bridgestone for 2006 and this is great news for me as I love their tyres more than any other rubber manufacturers'. I will test with them while I'm in America and also in France once we're back in Europe.

Again I'll be wearing a Red Bull-painted helmet in Britain and next summer I'll be running the Red Bull Motocross Academy Schools again to try and develop our young riders of the future.

Red Bull have some amazing events going on all over the world and every year there's always something organised in Northern Ireland – from what I've heard this year will be awesome!

Oakley will support

my championship campaigns with goggles, accessories and sunglasses and I'll visit their HQ in America when I'm there. If you've never seen it, it's an incredible building.

And, of course, I'll be running Wulfsport clothing and I've decided to go for my previously successful and lucky-for-me #13.

I got a lot of handlebar time in over Christmas including a day out with some friends on the trials bike on Christmas Eve and then competed in the trial on Boxing Day as always. Two days after that I rode a three-hour hare and hounds in Wicklow in Southern Ireland.

It was all really good fun and I love getting out on the bike in a non-important manner. Usually when I ride it's deadly serious because it's either a race or a test or practice or qualifying and that's all very important and demanding. So to ride for your own fun is great and I think it reminds me of how lucky I am to get to race for a living.

Plenty of smartarses often remind me of how lucky I am and it goes in one ear and out the other but self-realisation provides a clear message. I love bikes and I'll ride them forever...



The Cardiff SX was Gordy's last race in blue

Words by Gordon Crockard Photo by Suttty

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"Also right now I'm still trying to sort out my GNCC stuff in the US with all my other sponsors - they are pretty much all the same and have agreed that racing in the States is still good for them"

Big Plans!

The 2006 season's almost ready to kick off and Paul's got a lot up his sleeve...



WELL IT'S back to work for yet another season and, hopefully, it'll be a great one! Happy New Year and all that and I hope you had a good one. I've had a few nights out which have been a good laugh but now the party's over...

I must say that after working in the shop since November I'm itching to get back on the bike again. At the moment my plan is to ride three days a week and be in the gym for another two. I just hope we can have some decent weather so that I can ride as much as possible. Bikewise at the moment I have a '06 CR250 just waiting to be ridden and ridden. The plan for me will be to get bike fit in the month of January before testing and racing in early February.

I'm fairly lucky that this is my third season with Honda so there isn't too much I don't know about the bikes. For 2006 I plan on having small motor mods and suspension work but otherwise that's pretty much it. I'll just get on and ride the thing.

Also right now I'm still trying to sort out my GNCC stuff in the US with all my other sponsors - they are pretty much all the same and have agreed that racing in the US is still good for them. The plan for '06 is I will try and do as many UK events as possible and I'll also try to do some special European events such as the indoor races, Hells Gate and hopefully the big one - Erzberg - which I'm trying to talk Team DBR into doing! I'm sure they will be up for it!

Anyway, the riding front is pretty much sorted and with more help from PAR Homes and Honda it should make life easier. Last season was very hard and not doing the last two WEC races due to the cost of travelling was a tough decision to make - but at least '06 will be better on that front.

On to the race series and we've got some big changes happening - first of all Putoline have come on board as the title sponsor of the championship which helps us put some financial support into the '06 race series. It's looking like we're also going to be focusing more on the Clubman and Expert classes in the way of prize money and product support. Other changes are the introduction of a Novice class and losing one of the Expert classes in favour of just Expert two-stroke and four-stroke. The Pro class will again have five out of six races to score with the championship prize fund down to 10th in the overall standings.

All that is left to do at the moment is to confirm two venues which we hope to have finalised by the end of January ready for entries being released on February 1. That's pretty much all for the moment other than I cannot wait to start practising and racing.

See you at the events and good luck to all racers for the new season. Enjoy it!

Words by Paul Edmondson Photo by Jonty Edmunds



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"The Emerald Isle will be well represented in this year's Maxxis British MX Championship - Gordon has already started his hectic winter training schedule as he prepares for the season that I believe will see him re-establish himself on the world stage"



Game On!

The MX men win the annual charity footie tournament before turning their attention to more serious matters - like the '06 season

NO SOONER had the traditional Christmas bird been reduced to bones, the roar of motocross machines replaced the sound of Bing, Cliff Richard and the rest of the 'Cash in at Chrimbo' brigade.

Youth and adult riders enjoyed what looked like the last of the good weather for a while as they aired the 2006 machinery around the GP circuit at Desertmartin. While the rain and snow stayed away it was pretty cold which probably contributed to a few riders visiting the ambulance on the day.

One such rider was none other than Philip McLaughlin who is starting to take this crash testing lark a little too serious and redesigned the shape of his all-new 250cc Yamaha in the process.

Neil McKeown made an appearance on a quad which could cause concern to those involved in quad racing. Lurch is in great spirits and recently appeared on television as a member of the Margrave Park team who will represent Ireland in the forthcoming Spinal Games. Competitive as ever, Lurch seems to have found yet another talent in tennis. Since his accident towards the end of the summer Neil - in his usual manner - has shown the determination and attitude needed to continue his winning ways in life (I even hear that he has his own key for Musgrave Park Hospital, such are the demands put on Neil by the Beach Club at the Belfast Odyssey).

The fifth annual charity football competition was a great success. Hosted at Dromore Rugby Club on December 28, the floodlit venue provided entertainment both on and off the playing field.

As usual, riders from all disciplines - motocross, road racing, quads and enduro - swapped their helmets for shorts in the name of charity and the possibility of claiming the prestigious Bishops Court Trophy.

It must be said that the MX team played out of their skin and reclaimed the silverware after a stellar performance on the playing field (what about your Stella performance in the clubhouse Stevie? - SL). Up front it was Andrew O'Brien, Scotty and young Jason Garrett who plagued the enduro team in the final. And well done MX goalkeeper Stephen Russell who managed to keep a clean sheet throughout the competition which put the team on good footing for the overall win.

MX team manager Phil McCullough was in confident mood after his team qualified with a 3-0 drubbing of the



Wayne Garrett should be making a few appearances on the mainland this year

road racers. "Man, if we don't win tonight I will never play again," said Phil who was delighted with his team's performance at the end of the night.

Personality of the tournament was Doctor Fred McSorley who played well despite Rudolf's antlers being strapped to his head throughout the game while, behind the scenes, Dave Mulligan and Peter 'Bridgestone' put in the effort to make this worthy event grow in stature.

The Emerald Isle will be well represented in this year's Maxxis British MX Championship. Gordon has already started his hectic winter training schedule as he prepares for the season that I believe will see him re-establish himself on the world stage.

It's hard to put into words just how much Martin Barr accomplished in 2005 and now that he has moved up towards the front of the field the game will get harder. The Bike-it/Dixon team have brought Martin to this point and Steve Dixon knows that this will be a rookie year at a different level for his young star.

Ricky McKeown will run Hondas in the MX1 class and will be joined by multi-time Ulster champion Tommy Merton who will campaign under the DG Williamson banner.

GOMX/Russell's rider Robert Hamilton will also ride Yamaha machinery and other Irish riders - including Phil McLoughlin, the AJ Plumbing guys, Wulf Racing team, Adam McKee and probably Moto-One's Wayne Garrett - will all make an appearance during the season.

Good luck to all of them...

Words by Stevie Mills Photo by Suttly O'Sutton

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Stevie



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GOT SOMETHING TO SAY? Well here's where you should be saying it...

Gore Basin a goner?

Having just finished reading December's issue I can't believe that there will be no GP on the island [Isle of Wight] next year and, I doubt, ever again. What a waste of what's probably the best circuit on the world championship calendar.

I know it's a bit of hassle with the teams having to make two ferry crossings and also you always get the whiners who moan about the cost of the ferry and how much hassle it is on the ferry but I've been to both British GPs and the ferries have always been very reliable and reasonably priced.

How about the people who follow the GPs around the world – they don't moan about the price of travel then? I flew to America for the weekend to watch the GP at Budds Creek because I wanted to see the best riders in the world race. British motocross fans are some of the most passionate and knowledgeable fans in the world and come out in force for a GP on home soil.

Surely Steve Dixon could run the GP at the Gore Basin circuit on alternate years to Matchams or even every three if the new track near Winchester turns out to be a success for the des Nations.

I know it may be a bit of a ramble but it seems a shame to lose a circuit that even the riders love. Enough great circuits have been lost and we don't need another one gone.

Trevor, via email

We totally agree that it's a total bummer about Arretton. Mark Chamberlain and his team did an awesome job with the 2005 GP weekend but it still wasn't a financial success and until someone can turn that small fact around we're not gonna see GP motocross return to the IoW.

We don't think Steve Dixon's Bike-It promotions team will be running again at Matchams again so it looks like the Winchester circuit is going to be the home of British MX GPs for the foreseeable future.

Billy's best!

My name is Matt and I'm 15 years old. I have been riding for five years now with the Mid Sussex motocross club and one season with Slough Ace Riders. Now the year has come to an end and all the summer rounds' points have been added up it's time for the presentations.

The MSMXC was held in November with the guest being James Noble – he is a great man and a great rider. Slough was on December 3 with the guest of honour being Billy MacKenzie.

I would like to say thank you very much Billy for making it such a good time and being such a nice person. Billy is my favourite rider and hopefully I will be seeing him next year as he is a brilliant guy. I'll be cheering him on at the British and world championships. Keep up all the brilliant work you do at DBR.

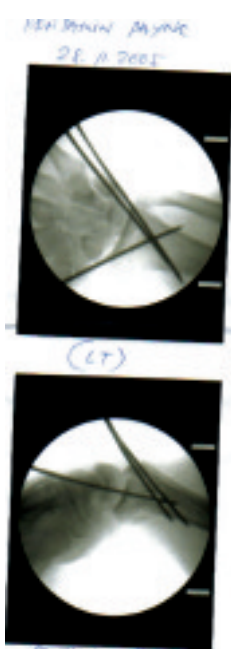
Matt, via email

Not much we can add to that...

Wired in Wiltshire

Thought you lot would like to see this. While I was riding at Somerset last weekend I hit a fast corner and the front wheel washed out, spitting me off. A couple of hours later I was in Odstock hospital where I stayed for three days with three fractures on my wrist.

The doctors put me back together with wires – lovely I thought! Still I'm out



Lardy in Love

I wasn't going to go and watch the Cardiff SX until I was told by Mark MooCann that DBR's very own Geoff 'Tubba' Walker would be riding. My mate Marcus and I made the trip down to Cardiff to watch and waited for the Pro Open qualifying race for a first look at a dirt bike riding legend on a technical and demanding track.

Walker's rodeo ride on the second lap rhythm section was the save of the night and could have been a big nasty get-off. I'm not taking the mick, it took a lot of minerals to go out there and ride on a track with some big jumps and the night proved that Tubba does not have startgate phobia.

I also know that Geoff trained really hard before the event – running, cycling and weight training – and looked strong and fit on every lap that he put in.

He even had time to talk to his fan club on his mobile phone (just like Tom Cruise at a film premiere) in between races and was constantly waving to over-excited honeys in the stadium who probably wanted to try and get a kiss-and-tell deal with the News of the World.

Well done to DBR for letting the MX world see a legend perform.

Lardy, Malvern

Wow, you must be Wakker's second biggest fan – after Geoff of course! No doubt you'll be gutted to hear that you missed his performance in practice where he proved he had massive cojones by nailing the finishline triple twice.

And Godfrey's lucky he carries such large cojones because they sure did help cushion the blow when he came up a little short on the second attempt.

Just imagine how much he'd have pranged his perineum (check your dictionary) if those bad boys hadn't stepped up to the task of protecting his undercarriage.

now. I'd like to thank all that helped me especially the nurses and Shar my missus.

Ben, Wiltshire

We're all up for a bit of body modification here at DBR but that's just too much dude! Hope you're back on the bike real soon...

Fly boy

I'm into FMX in a big way but can not find anywhere in or around Manchester to ride. Have you heard or do you know of anywhere I could go so I can hit some big jumps.

Daz, via email

The only FMX facility in the UK that we know of is Gary Taylor's G+P Training Park near Coventry. But you can't just turn up and start hitting his ramps so you'd best give the glamour boy a call on 07775 652160.



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Man these boots are awesome! After years of poor distro in this country it's pretty darn cool that Gaerne motocross boots are now much more readily available than ever before. The SG10s we've got pictured here are the daddy of the range and with good reason. The boots offer a hinged calf-style ankle-support system that not only gives good side to side protection but also makes for a shorter break-in period. With top-notch protection, excellent styling and decent distro we can really see Gaerne stamping their authority on the MX boot market this year.

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SHOOTING STARS

Sutty delves into his archives to bring you a selection of the best shots of 2005 that didn't make the mag

Words and photos by Sutty

ONE OF the major troubles with helping produce a magazine is that there's always someone in a suit saying you can only have X amount of pages this month because of budgets and whatnot. And, unfortunately, the knock-on effect of that is that sometimes you have to come to a compromise.

Yeah, it would be awesome to fill an issue with hundreds of pictures from mega events like the Matchams or Arreton GPs but sometimes there's just not enough room and lots of great pics go to waste and remain unseen forever.

That's why I've thrown together this little scrapbook of some of my – and one from Toby Fuller's collection – mostly unseen images of 2005. By no means am I claiming they're the best shots of the year – that would just be crazy – but they are a little different from the norm and/or personal favourites of mine.

You might be wondering why there's no pics of riders like Josh Coppins or Billy Mac in here. Well, Josh gets enough great shots in mags as it is and in Billy's case the fault lies with me – I just can't take an awesome shot of Billy to save my life.

When he won the first moto at the Isle of Wight GP – what an event that was – I, and every other photohound there, thought we had him covered. 'He's bound to do a crazy celebration right after the finish line,' I reckoned but no, not Billy. He only goes and rides up to one of the highest points of the Arreton circuit, throws down his bike and salutes the crowd in fine style!

Only one person – a marshal named Rob Quelch – got a shot that did that moment justice, unfortunately it isn't high enough quality to use large in print although it is shown on the Paced DVD that's reviewed on page 44 in this month's issue. But anyway that's why there's no Billy – one of my personal aims is to get some great Billy Mac shots taken in '06.

Anyhoo, enough jibber jabber from me. Hope you enjoy the selection...



The aliens have landed, er, I mean the Alessis have landed! Jack Burnicle introduces Mike, Jeff and their two top techs to a bumper crowd at the Sheffield Supercross





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A very youthful looking
Glen Phillips caught having
a sneaky race day ice lolly?
Don't let Embo catch
you mate...





2005 was a typical grand prix season for Tom Church. It's all about flowery fields (left) and recuperating from big crashes (like this one at Matchams)



Carl Nunn collected his first (of many?) British MX2 title in 2005 at the grand old age of 26

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Bryan MacKenzie is one of the most exciting riders to watch in Brit MX (you just never know when he's gonna go down next – just kiddin' Bry). Hopefully a change to four-stroke power in '06 won't dampen down his super-aggressive style too much



Toby Fuller is one of the best British photographers in motocross as this vibrant first turn shot from the Zolder GP shows

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The Desertmartin startgate has never looked so sexy. Yeah I know it's been done a million times before but I can't help loving shots like this...

Future star Jake Nicholls lays it low enough to drag the bars in the dirt on his first ever ride on a Motovision Suzuki. Expect great things from this kid...

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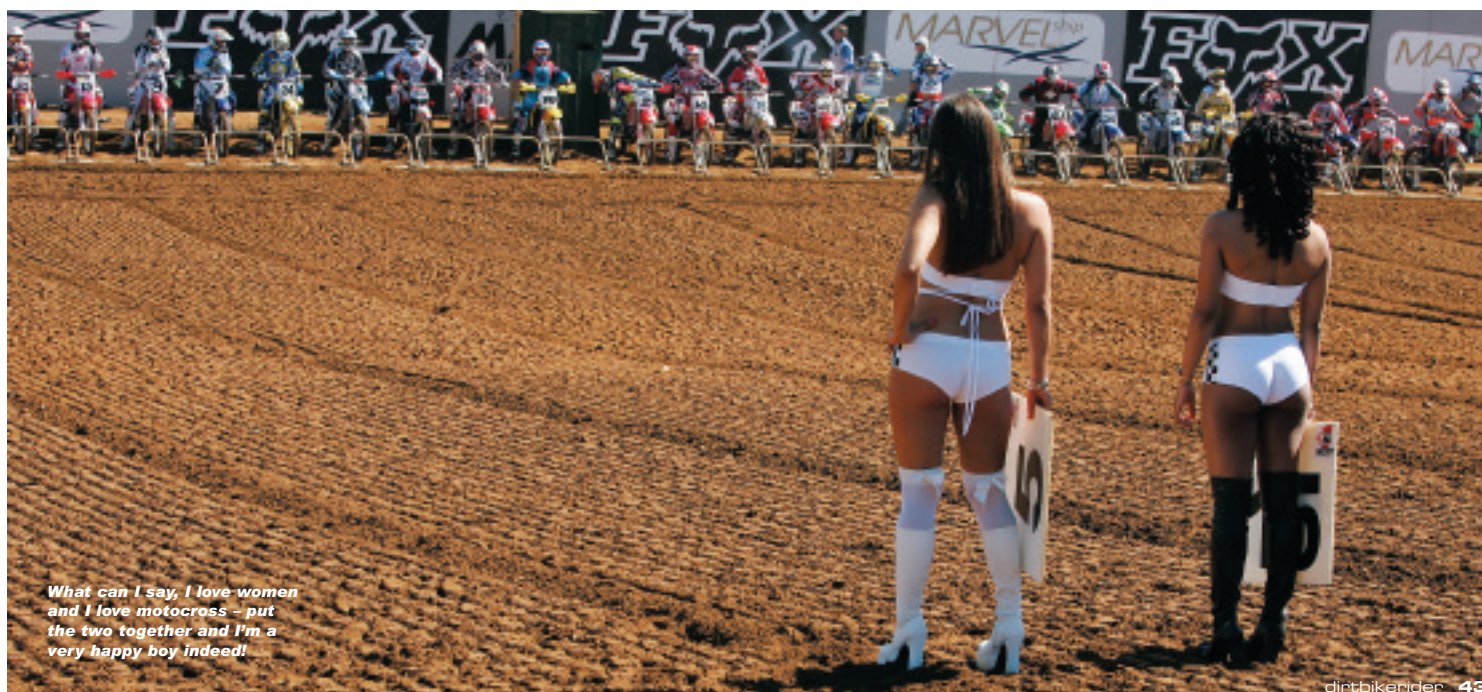
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*I'll have a P please Bob!
Phinnish phenom Jussi
Vehvilainen ponders
profusely this painstaking
pre-race procedure*



*How ***** off would you be
if you'd just crashed out of a
safe qualifying spot for your
home GP on the last lap of
your heat? We didn't dare
ask Lewis Gregory when it
happened to him*



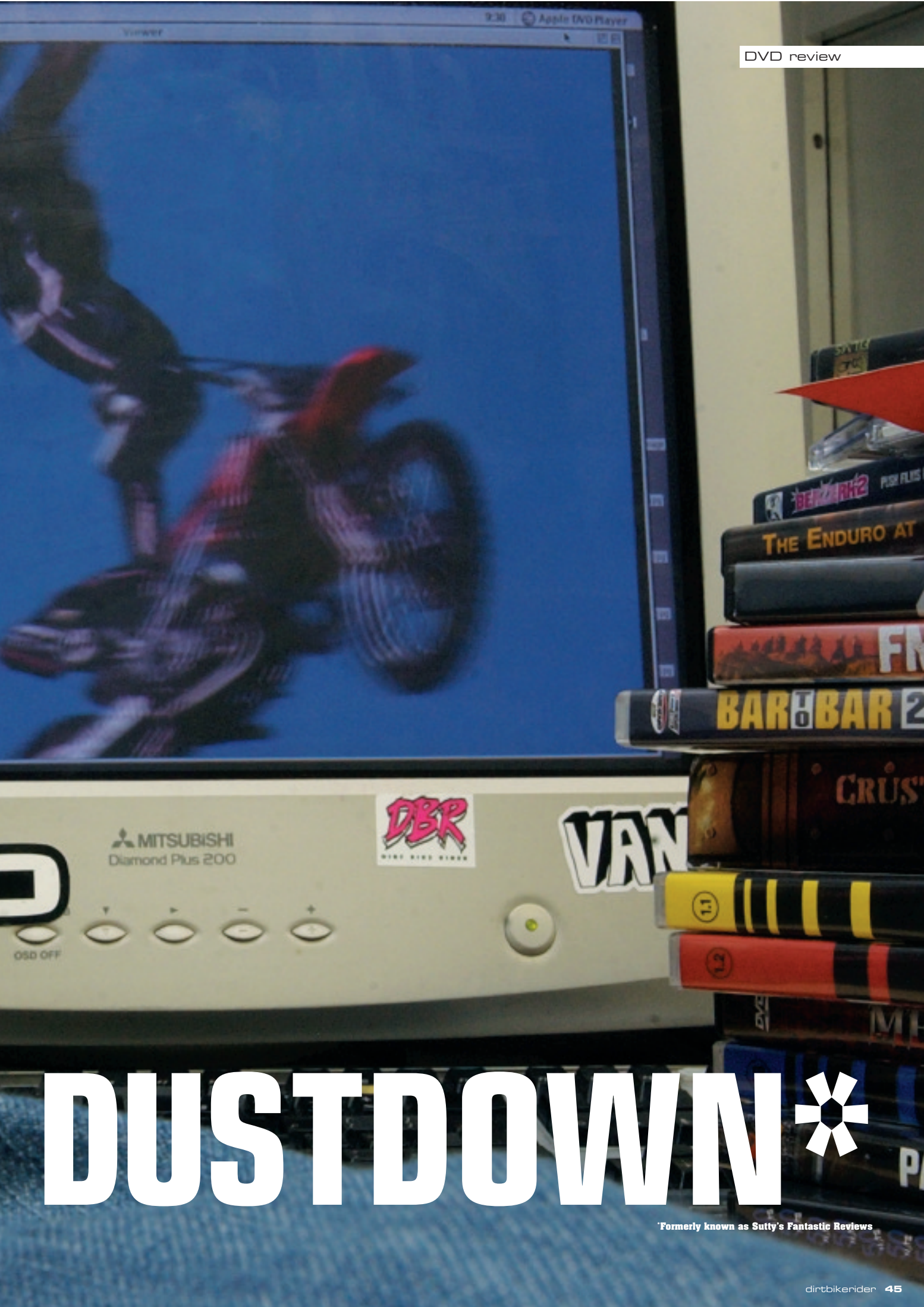
*What can I say, I love women
and I love motocross - put
the two together and I'm a
very happy boy indeed!*



DAWG'S DVD

There's probably gonna be fudge all on TV this winter so how about slotting a dirt bike DVD into your player?

Words by Deputy Dawg



DUSTDOWN*

*Formerly known as Suffy's Fantastic Reviews



Paced



PACED IS an all-new documentary-style look at the 2005 MX GP season as it runs its course then leads in to the big daddy of all MX events – the Motocross des Nations.

Possibly the finest parts of the movie are the recollections of racers Ben Townley, Josh Coppins, Billy Mac and Stefan Everts as they re-live the highs and lows of the season. It's great to see how genuinely excited they are as they talk about the season's best passes, crashes and victories and the on-screen action is certainly well up to par too.

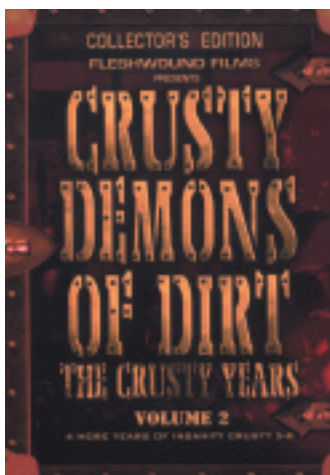
However, one area which lets the DVD down is the voice of the monotone narrator who I would gladly kick square in the nuts for commenting on the world's most exciting sport as if it were the world staring championship or something equally dull.

Aside from that small point it's a frickin' awesome production so let's all pray for a Paced part deux – or even Special Edition – with narration from that cowboy dude who leant his voice to TGO II!

The Crusty Years Volume II



A FOUR-DISC box set that includes Crustys five to eight you say? Yes we do...



SX Exposed 1-3



FROM THE studio of acclaimed movie-maker Greg Godfrey comes a gripping trilogy of tales featuring winners, losers, posers and saddening injuries. The thrilling movie – that has not been nominated for eight Oscars including best soundtrack – takes a behind-the-scenes look at America's #1 indoor motocross type sport thing. Yup, that'll be supercross!

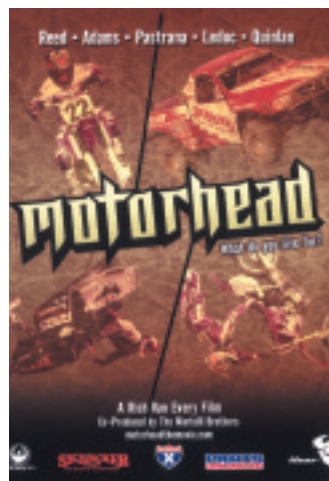
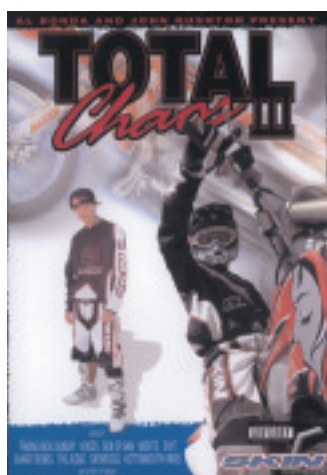
Starring Ricky Carmichael as The Goat and with a supporting cast of Chad Reed, James Stewart, Travis Pastrana and Kevin Windham the story unfolds in 16 cities around North America with an exciting ending played out in Las Vegas' Sam Boyd stadium. Thrilling stuff!

There are plenty of interviews with the stars packed onto the disc too and to be fair each part of the story is equally as enjoyable viewed on its own or watched in sequential order with the others.

Total Chaos III



LOADS OF great freestyle motocross with a little BMX, skate vert and wakeboarding thrown in too. It's little wonder that the Skin Industries-sponsored Total Chaos series are so popular as it's no-fuss action-all-the-way in this Al Borda film.



Motorhead



NO LEMMY, no point! Just kidding hee hee... Erm, so what can be said about Motorhead?

If you love motocross and its related sports as much as I love pork-based breakfasts then you'll love Motorhead as it's full of MX, FMX, SX and SM action along with some super-gnarly off-road truck and snowmobile madness.

Although it features top-notch riding action from pros including Chad Reed, Nate Adams and Travis Pastrana one of the highlights for me has to be the footage from the SX GP in Seville which has to be the muddiest supercross race in the history of stadium-based scrambly-bike racing.

3rd Gear Pinned



THIS IS a movie by Trent Griswold who as far as I can remember was last seen driving to Walley World with his family. Oh wait, that was Clark Griswold – oh how the passing years have played havoc with my memory!

Anyhoo, 3rd Gear Pinned in a minibike movie that stars Chris Clark and Chris Skinner as they take fiddy-riding to the next level. Apparently the next level is jumping huge doubles pinned in third gear and back-flipping everything else. Sweet!



Berzerk 2



I LOVED the original Berzerk with a passion and Berzerk 2 leaves my loins in a similar state of lustful longing. The movie made by Push films – a European production crew based in Norway – features every decent European freestyle rider as well as a handful of top Yanks.

But it's the Scandinavian riders who are the real stars of this show and extra special attention is focussed on Ailo Gaup, Frederik Johansson and Oystein Kjørstad who also star in the opening rock show segment with Andre Villa and crazy German Busty Wolter.

There's a good selection of British riding talent featured too as Chris Brock, glamour-boy Gary Taylor, Disco Dave Wiggins, Jamie Squibb and Sean Vukovic all make an appearance in their own little sections. Definitely one of the finer freestyle films on the market at the moment!

Psychomoto



IF YOU wanna know how to get the best from your supermoto bike then this is the DVD for you as it explains how to do stoppies and wheelies but most important of all – how to back it in like a pro. It's also worth checking out to catch some amazing footage from the Mettet Superbiker event.





Faisst: Mentally Twisted



THIS DVD is worth watching just to see Brian Deegan play the role of Officer Boner Skalansky in one of the many hilarious skits that run alongside the top-shelf FMX action. But be warned, the adult nature of some of the scenes depicted in this DVD should only be seen by a more mature – but at the same time slightly immature – audience.

Probably the best segment in this whole DVD comes in the 'extras' section as there's plenty of footage from the foampit as Twitch and Faisst learn the flip!

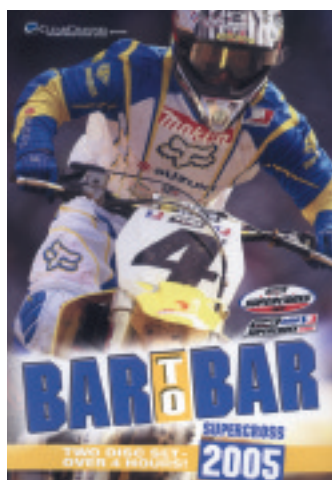
Awesome!

Metal Anger



CALL ME a liar but I'm pretty sure that 'metal 'anger' was one of Eliza Doolittle's lines from the movie My Fair Lady. While this 'ere movie doesn't star Audrey 'Epburn it does 'ave an 'ole 'ost of modern day FMX 'eroes including Brian Sheppard, Nicky Danielson and the world's most underrated freestyler ever to sling his leg across a bike – Myles Richmond.

It's well worth buying just to see how smooth Mylo is on a bike but when you throw in a little FMX-style carnage as well as some other top riding then you know you've got yer money's worth!



Bar to Bar: Supercross 2005



IF YOU love AMA supercross and you've got over four hours to kill why not take out two birds with one stone? Simply slot this DVD in your player then put your feet-up and relax to the sight of Ricky Carmichael doing what he does best – killing the competition in stadia around the good ole US of A.

With all the 125 and 250 action from each and every round – except Daytona (don't ask!) – you get a blow-by-blow account of almost the entire 2005 SX season. And there are plenty of interviews and all the gossip from the season's press conferences on the 'extras' disc too. Sweet!

Travis and the Nitro Circus 3



TRAVIS AND his dumb-ass redneck buddies (gosh darn hillbillies – Marge) are back for the third installment of the very popular Nitro Circus series of DVDs. Right from the off the action comes thick and hard as anything and everything (including Travis' buddies) is crashed, thrashed or trashed – often with hilarious consequence.

Also worth watching to see the world's first double back-flip landed to dirt.



50 Nuts 2: More Boobs



PERSONALLY I was shocked by this DVD's name and I almost refused to watch it (I'm a good boy really) but then I remembered just how sweet the original 50 Nuts was and decided to dive in regardless!

The case of the DVD promises to deliver bigger hits, bigger tricks and bigger tits and I can't really argue with that statement. 50 Nuts 2 is more of a lifestyle DVD than an all-out action movie but that's not a bad thing and it certainly fills a gap in the Over 18s minibike movie market!

FMX Riot: Duel in the Desert



WHAT A great idea! Take some of the world's best freestylers and dump them in the desert with no ramps or tape measures and see who can bust biggest on natural terrain.

With bad-ass riding skills from world class FMXers including Metz, Twitch, Todd Potter and Busty Wolter the action comes thick and fast from the dunes of Glamis and the hills of Ocotillo.

And as an added bonus for fans of on-screen freestyle magic FMX Riot is the first ever freerange mosickle movie to be shot in High Definition – resolutiontastic dudes!



Bubba's Flying 50 Freak Circus



THIS DVD follows the rules of the old saying 'never judge a book by its cover'. The sleeve may kid you into thinking you're about to be bored rotten but the action inside is fricking awesome.

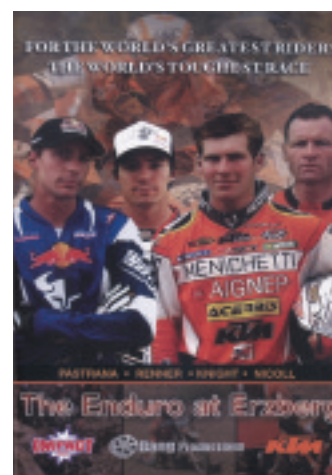
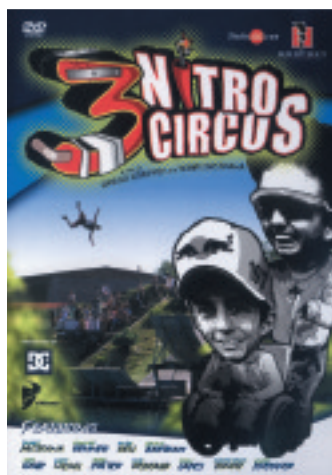
Basically this DVD's all about Bubba and his cronies as they do their freestyle groupie bit before the lard-tub Lothario checks out a myriad of minibike magic from right around the globe. Ack, it's hard to explain it all in detail so just go buy, beg or borrow a copy.

The Enduro at Erzberg



WHOEVER CAME up with the title for this DVD needs a good shoeing and he or she is not the only one. The hairstylist of cover stars David Knight and Kurt Nicoll is equally in need of a good word – at least Ronnie Renner and Travis Pastrana had the good sense to keep their hats on – but luckily you can't just judge a DVD by its coverstars' hairstyles.

The Erzberg Enduro's probably the toughest single-day event in the world and this DVD shows it off in all its gruesome glory! It's a Discovery Channel documentary style affair but there's enough fast-paced action to keep you hooked right to the end.







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Supported ride for '06 up for grabs

WIN!WIN!WIN!

HOW DOES the prospect of a fully-supported Yamaha deal for the '06 season sound? Too late for a Christmas pressie? Too early for an April Fool? Just too damn good to be true?

Well it is true and one lucky – and talented – DBR reader could find themselves on the receiving end of an awesome prize package courtesy of Ride MX.

The Ride MX Factor is a unique competition looking to find and then nurture undiscovered young talent. Open to 11-18-year-olds, included in the prize will be...

- Clothing and safety equipment from Lazer helmets, Oakley goggles, Shift Racing, EVS braces and Berik boots
- Putoline Oils
- FMF pipes
- ASV levers
- Rider instruction from former world 125cc champ Jamie Dobb and DBR test rider Tony Marshall

...and there's shedloads more still to be confirmed!

So, how does the competition work and how can you enter? It's dead simple. If you're aged between 11 and 18 and a regular racer we want to hear from you. Send in a full portfolio detailing your racing history, current bike, existing sponsors, long-term goals, outside interests and anything else you think we'll be

interested in. But keep it honest – stretch the truth and you will be found out!

All portfolios will be scrutinised by our four-man panel of Ride MX's Paul Wood, Fox Racing's Ash Kane and Jamie Dobb and Tony Marshall. A short-list of 10 finalists will then be invited to a Midlands-based track sometime between February 18-24 where the rider with the Ride MX Factor will be decided.

The winner will then be presented with their bike for the '06 season at the Hawkstone Park International MX on March 5 by Stefan Everts. And the nine runners-up will each get a 15 per cent discount from Ride MX during '06.

Still interested? Okay, send your portfolios to 'Ride MX Factor', Ride MX, Unit 13 Western Road Industrial Estate, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire CV37 0AH.

Entries close on February 13.

- A supported ride through Yamaha UK with full back-up from Ride MX
- Monthly bike maintenance in the Ride MX workshops
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- Michelin tyres

AGENT ORANGE

When Pit Beirer was paralysed at the 2003 Bulgarian GP his KTM team realised that he was as smooth off the track as was ragged on it – and their continued relationship has been mutually beneficial

Words and photos by Ray Archer

FOR MANY Pit Beirer epitomized everything that was visual, spectacular and physical about grand prix motocross racing. The German always wore a smile across his face and was an authentic throttle-winger of the highest calibre – his all-action style was explosive to observe and a pleasure to watch.

His eight top-five world championship finishes in a 14-year career ensured that he was one of his country's best ever racers and he peaked with runner-up position in 1999 while riding for Kawasaki. Pit was also one of the friendliest and most professional riders in the paddock and his accident – and subsequent paralysis – at the 2003 Bulgarian round while riding for KTM was a huge shock to the sport and entire off-road racing community.

Now 33-years-old, Beirer works for KTM in Austria as one of their sporting directors and attends several GPs each year where his signature remains as eagerly sought as the team's current stars.

Since his accident Pit's taken on a very different role at KTM's Austrian HQ



DBR: What are your duties within the KTM organisation?

Pit: "That is maybe the most difficult question. We are basically three guys working in the motorcycle sport marketing department – Kurt Nicoll is our motorsport boss along with Heinz Kinigadner and myself. I support Kurt with rider contracts with Italian or German-speaking guys while Kurt handles all of the English and French-speaking contracts.

"I am there when we prepare the sponsor contracts and there for the rider contracts so I am in the middle to do for the sponsors what we have promised them and ensure that we fulfil our obligations but also be there for the riders to make them feel happy which in turn brings results."

DBR: Does it help to come from a riding background?

Pit: "All three of us come from a riding background – between us we have a vast amount of experience which we try to bring to the race track. When I see a rider I know what he has to do and let him do his job. I cannot fill him up with marketing questions – his head is only focused on racing and winning – but if I can see that he is not fit then I will tell him.

"On the other hand, when someone is very fit and still struggling I come back to the factory and ask the guys here to help him with better shock or engine. Another aspect of my job is to know when the riders must make a show – when to act for public relations and sponsors' needs."

DBR: While you were still racing, where did you see your career heading after you retired?

Pit: "As a rider I was focused on riding and would have liked to be involved some way in racing. My dream or my passion could have been through coaching, schooling young riders, maybe through fitness development or management but that all came to an abrupt end after my crash. Now I have my ideal job.

"I was maybe 29 years old when I crashed in Bulgaria and was lucky to survive. My plan was to ride GPs for two possibly three more years and then worry about the future. I have been fortunate as now my job is one level higher than I could ever have hoped for with the only difference being that I don't have the use of my legs. Before I hoped to have a job related to motorcycles but now I have a career – there is a huge difference."

DBR: KTM stood by you after your injury?

Pit: "I have to thank KTM a million times for their support and the opportunities they have given to me – they have opened up new horizons for me to be involved and make a livelihood with a job for which I have a passion.

"I have been here almost two years – it has been a steep learning curve but I like to think that I am a reasonably intelligent guy who can work and communicate with anyone. Once you know the key people and what they expect of

you it is much easier. Of course there are 1,600 people working within KTM – this is a big business – but although I was never a full factory rider until the end of my career I still had to run it as a business. I had to pay my mechanic, pay my engine guy, my suspension guy, trainer, run my own truck and cars. I made all of the customs documentation for the overseas trips so in fact I was my own team manager too which was a foundation for a business or part of the business that I am running for KTM now.

"I was always interested to learn other languages and I think if you ask anyone I was always professional with my sponsors and racing partners and presented them well while I was racing."

DBR: KTM have assembled a 'dream team' to launch an attack on the MX1 world title in 2006 – before KTM always attracted young riders to develop so why choose experienced guys now.

Pit: "I think at KTM we are now ready for the likes of Pichon and Tortelli, riders with vast experience who can help KTM fulfil their ambitions. We have won the MX2 and MX3 world titles but never the MX1 so there is one title which is missing from our trophy cabinet – the one which is the most prestigious of all. We are now ready for this challenge!

"Ben Townley has helped our technicians develop what we feel is a machine now very capable of taking a MX1 title. With Ben we had a great package, we were partners. The outcome was, as everyone could see, a very competitive race machine that was capable of beating anyone in the world – even Stefan Everts – on occasion.

"With experience also comes problems. Everyone knows that Mickael Pichon is not an easy rider to work with but we have itemised the problems in the teams he has ridden for before and we want to do better. This will be a difficult challenge but if they [Seb and Mickael] are kept happy knowing that everyone is 100 per cent behind them they will be strong and hopefully focused."

DBR: From the outside it looks like KTM have signed riders and then undermined them by signing even more riders for the same job – first it was De Reuver, then Tortelli and then Pichon. Doesn't this affect riders' heads?

Pit: "It was not our intention to start messing with riders' heads and confidence so long before the season has started but everyone knew that KTM would not be happy with just riders like Barragan and De Reuver. They are very good riders and will develop with time but we have a very big budget for motocross and need to win.

"At first Pichon didn't know what problems he was going to have with his knee, he didn't even know if he wanted to race – not just for us but with anyone in the future. Things went very quick from there on in. Sebastian was interested and is a highly respected talent



who we signed on a Thursday, Pichon was testing our bike the same day and came back right away after riding it saying he wanted to commit to being a KTM rider. I could not turn around to a rider of Pichon's ability and say 'sorry, you're too late, we don't want you'. It was late but if he wanted to ride our bike we would have to find the resources to hire him. It was not planned this way but that is how it turned out.



"The plan was when Kurt signed Sebastian then we were full — no room for anymore riders — but on my way to Gaildorf for the GP I spoke with Kurt in the US, Mr Pierer [Stefan Pierer — KTM's CEO] and Heinz Kinigadner and it was agreed that we would find extra budget for Pichon.

"The deal was done but it would incur not just extra budget but also stretch our resources and make us provide more factory bikes and technicians that we had planned for. I think this is what makes KTM different to many other teams or even manufacturers — we all knew that this was an ideal opportunity and we signed Pichon."

DBR: How can you 'stretch your resources' when your total racing budget for '06 is over 34 million Euros?

Pit: "That is the total that we spend on racing and development each year which includes motocross, enduro, supermoto and MotoGP. We cover all aspects but it's true we have extra money from outside sponsors.

"I often hear in the paddock talk of how KTM can afford or justify the huge costs of racing but we are allocated 7.5 per cent of the total turnover of KTM — it's the company philosophy to go racing but that is driven by successful motorcycle sales. One feeds the other and to be successful in one area you also have to be successful in the other too."

DBR: Is KTM so different from other manufacturers with regards to racing activities?

Pit: "In many companies they struggle to get investment in racing and R&D — they steal the money from one department to fund another. We don't have to worry about that, we know each year as KTM become even more popular and the sales of our motorcycles increase then so will our budget to go racing.

"On that philosophy we can build race teams and plan ahead — we know in advance what budget will be allocated and we can sign riders accordingly."

DBR: You must have someone with a lot of enthusiasm holding the purse strings?

Pit: "Under normal racing team conditions once you have the budget that can just be the start of your problems but within KTM and under Mr Pierer we have a very enthusiastic man who knows how to motivate people and how to win championships. Often it is like Christmas — he comes to us and asks what we need to win and we simply tell him the riders we want, the

crucial. The company is called KTM Sport Motorcycles, the fine balance between racing and selling motorcycles is a key area why we have been so successful over the years and hopefully into the future.

"When our sport is televised you often see the KTM team managers — either from motocross or MotoGP — straight on the telephone when our rider crosses the line. They are speaking with Mr Pierer. He has the passion to go racing — without that passion there might be no vision to go racing or maybe less enthusiasm to build the company even bigger. Either you have a feel for racing or you don't but we are fortunate that we all have the same goals at KTM."

DBR: What are KTM's plans for 2006?

Pit: "We took a big risk — having already signed several riders we went ahead and hired Sebastian Tortelli and Mickael Pichon very late in the season. We have won nearly every off-road world title but the MX1 championship has eluded KTM. We want that title really bad and would like to win it while Stefan Everts is still at the top.

"But now, when we are technically ready, Ben is leaving for America — this makes us unhappy as Ben is liked very much within our organisation having already brought us a world title. We realise that he is still young and has his dreams to race in the USA so we wish him good luck.

"In the MX2 class we have been unlucky through injury to our two main championship hopefuls but David Philippaerts came from his two-stroke ride to save the day. David moved up to the four-stroke and within a few races he was winning GPs and almost every weekend after that he made the podium. We did what we thought was right and it all worked out, now he rejoins us on the factory bike again and I think he must be considered as one of the biggest threats along with Tyla Ratray."

DBR: Do you have any controls over the more experienced riders like Pichon and Tortelli?

Pit: "We pay our riders a lot of money each year but we cannot wait until March when the season starts to see if they are fit or not!"

materials we need or anything we don't have and he will do his very best to provide these resources and give us the best possibility to win championships — just don't think that's so simple because he will come back and ask why we didn't win if we don't come back with a world title.

"The success story so far stands at 104 world championship titles split between individual titles and manufacturer titles. We know that we cannot win everything but through the last four or five seasons we have been at the front of nearly every off-road championship. Wherever we compete — and this is always at the highest level — we are competitive if not leading the way."

DBR: So who is ultimately steering KTM's racing activities?

Pit: "Often people get confused who is leading the way within KTM Racing. Kurt Nicoll is the head of racing — he makes the decision as to who we hire, where we race and what championships are important for use. He in turn is supported by many others. I am the youngest of the backroom boys — not just from looks and age but also experience within the company and organisation.

"We have many experienced people like Heinz Kinigadner who was with KTM when they were successful before the company's bankruptcy several years ago and he brought Mr Pierer into KTM to help build on a vision. Heinz has contacts throughout the world who will always be a help to us in motorsport racing."

DBR: Is everyone interested in racing?

Pit: "Mr Pierer is away racing most weekends — his knowledge about business and racing is





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"Having Georges between the riders, the team and KTM will help to keep the riders happy – he has an eye for that. If we find a rider is winning and in top shape then he might not need to work with Georges but he will always be there to offer advice and support. From the riders' view it is always easier to have a former rider to relate too."

DBR: What about rider fitness?

Pit: "We have the use of the Red Bull Fitness Training Centre where all of our riders will go to be assessed. The riders will be tested three

times per year to access their level of fitness and stamina. This was originally an aspect of my job to work with riders on these problems but my duties have taken me in a different direction so I don't have time to work with this programme.

"We do not want to make extra demands about fitness from our riders, we want to work with them and help them. In the past it has been all too easy for riders – not just our riders – to blame the rear shock or the suspension but when we know the level of fitness we can tell the rider to get fit and then we go and change suspension settings. Fitness is a rider's responsibility and they must take care of this. Again George will be working very closely with the riders and he will also be able to give a second opinion if a rider is ever unhappy about a bike set-up."



FRESH START

After a long and glittering career Ryan Hughes is saying goodbye to the US national motocross scene and focusing his attention on the WORCS

Words & photos by Jonty Edmunds

RYAN HUGHES is a rider who needs no introduction to motocross fans across the world. The 32-year-old Californian turned pro all the way back in 1990 and his 15-year career has included spells racing GPs as well as US SX and MX campaigns on factory machinery. Now Ryno is refocusing his career in the less glamorous – but no less competitive – world of WORCS racing...

DBR: Firstly Ryno, when did you start seriously thinking about racing 'off-road' and moving away from motocross?

Ryno: "I'm not sure exactly, it just kind of popped into my mind one day while I was driving down the highway. I called Mike Webb – who runs Suzuki's off-road programme in the US – and talked to him about it. I think he was a little bit surprised that I was interested in racing off-road and I was surprised how interested he was in me riding a Suzuki. Before I knew it everything had come together really quickly and, well, I've now signed a two-year deal with Suzuki to compete in the World Off Road Championship Series (WORCS)."

DBR: You won the first running of the Endurocross race in Las Vegas. Did that start you thinking about off-road racing as a career move?

Ryno: "Maybe a little bit. Actually, I won a round of the WORCS in '03 and, like you said, I won Endurocross in '04. I would have also had two top-fives in GNCC races if my bike hadn't of broken. I think winning the Endurocross last year opened a lot of people's eyes towards what I can do. I'm not just a motocross and supercross rider. I have good skills and love racing motorcycles so I can adapt to other styles of racing."

DBR: How much is Ryan Hughes racing hare scramble and cross-country events about simply wanting to extend your career and earn money and how much is it about really wanting to prove that you are more than just a motocross and supercross racer?

Ryno: "I love to race but I'm just a little sick of the national motocross scene. I want to do something different, something a little more low-key. The off-road scene is just that, there will be less pressure. The racing is still very competitive and very professional but not as cut throat as national motocross."

"I can extend my career by five years or so and have some fun. That is what drew me towards off-road racing, the fact that it isn't quite as serious as national motocross and supercross. It is a new challenge that I think will be a lot of fun."



Ryno won the Vegas Endurocross in '04 and was back to defend his crown last year





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DBR: You rode well at the opening round of the US GNCC series in Texas a few years ago. What were you able to learn from that event about off-road racing?

Ryno: "That you need to be patient and that passing the guy in front of you doesn't have to be done immediately. Having raced motocross and supercross for so many years I have a mentality of pushing hard, always racing and wanting to attack everything. In hare scramble and cross-country racing you need to take your time a little more and not be so aggressive. I guess that race I did in Texas taught me I need to be a little more patient."

DBR: What do you think your strengths are going to be when you start racing WORCS events next year?

Ryno: "I guess my strengths are going to be my fitness, speed, smoothness, line selection, stuff like that. I'm pretty good technically as a rider so I think I have what it takes to win."

DBR: Are there any areas that you feel you will have to work on?

Ryno: "No, not so much. If I was doing GNCC events, which are in the trees, then I would have to learn how to race fast in those conditions but because WORCS events are like long, fast MX races I'm pretty good at that."

DBR: Do you have any plans to do any East Coast GNCC races next year?

Ryno: "My deal is to compete in the WORCS series which is on the West Coast but I want to do two East Coast GNCC races. I don't know which races I will do but, yeah, I want to do a couple. I just have to find some races that fit with my racing schedule."

DBR: You switched from a 250cc four-stroke Honda to a 450cc four-stroke Suzuki and into the 250 class for the Broome-Tioga national but things didn't go so well. Why did you switch classes so late in your last full national motocross season?

Ryno: "Just because it was hard staying competitive against the teams with bigger testing budgets. In the 250 class you can race a 450 four-stroke that doesn't need to be as tuned as a 250cc four-stroke. Also, after the first bunch of riders I can be competitive in the 250 class. The bigger bike can be harder to race but if you know how to ride a 450 then it can be easier. The 250 class riders are more experienced and aren't as willing to take big risks like a lot of the 125 guys."

DBR: You finished fifth in the second moto – you must have been pleased with that?

Ryno: "Yeah, I was. The first moto was a disaster because I had some problems with my roll-offs getting smashed. In the second race I got a good start and battled with Michael Byrne which was pretty good first time out."

DBR: Will you compete in any AMA national motocross races in '06?

Ryno: "No, I don't think so. I just don't have the drive to do that any more but I'll never say never. You know, I've raced the national motocross scene for a lot of years and had good and bad times. It's a very competitive series and you really need to be on top of your game to do well. That's hard as a privateer rider."

DBR: How much harder is it to compete in the US national motocross championship as a privateer than it is as a factory-supported rider?

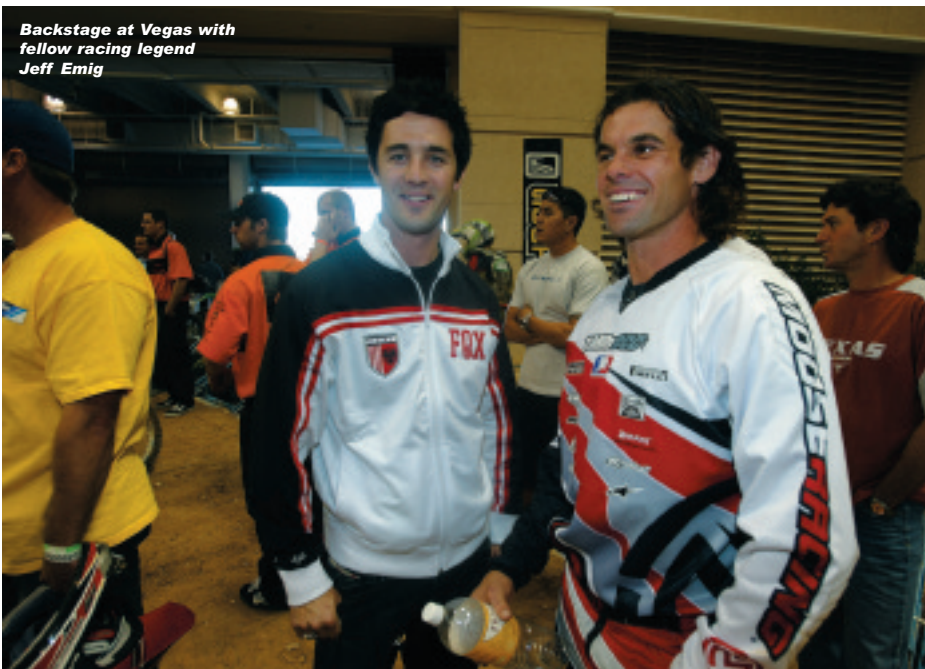
Ryno: "It's definitely harder because you have to be a team owner, team manager and a rider all rolled into one. You have to oversee everything, I mean everything. That's what



After 15 years of MX and SX Hughes is trying his hand at other forms of off-road racing



Backstage at Vegas with fellow racing legend Jeff Emig



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makes it so difficult. You have to worry about where the money is coming from, dealing with sponsors and ordering in product as well as training and racing.

"As a factory rider everything is done for you, all you have to worry about is training and riding. The factory teams have much bigger budgets so they don't have to worry about stuff as much as a privateer rider. They spend more on testing and have the best of everything which makes for a big gap between the professionals and the privateers."

DBR: Is there any chance that you might compete in the ISDE?

Ryno: "Yeah, definitely. I'd like to do that. When my career is over I would like to say that I've done as many different races as possible and try and win as many of those as I can. I want to be one of the best all-round riders that's ever ridden a motorcycle. I would like to try and win the ISDE, to be the first American to win it. If I do that's great, if I don't then at least I tried. I have won the Motocross des Nations, along with Ricky Carmichael and Travis Pastrana in '00, I think I would be the first rider ever to win both if I could win the ISDE [Hmmm, what about Stefan Everts? – SL]."

DBR: There are two World Enduro Championship races in North America next year – do you have any plans to compete in those races?

Ryno: "I would like to and I have them on my calendar but it just depends on a bunch of things nearer the time. I will have to see what races I have around them, how my season is going and how my motivation is for those races closer to the time. I'd like to but I have other priorities so the world championship races will have to fit in with my other races."

DBR: You have said that you want to get involved in helping up and coming riders in motocross and supercross – are you still planning on doing that now you're committed to winning the WORCS?

Ryno: "Obviously racing and winning are still my number one priority but I am still aiming to help some other, younger riders. I have learned a lot over the years and I want to pass that knowledge onto others. The great things about the WORCS series is that I only have a couple of races each month so I still have time to help other riders."

DBR: Finally, what is your goal for '06?

Ryno: "I want to win the WORCS. Another goal is just to have fun. The fun has been missing from my racing for a while so I want to get that back again. I want to win that championship."



Life as a privateer in the AMA 125cc Nats was tough for Ryno

profile

© Frank Hoppen



Ryno switched to the 250 class in last year's American outdoor series

© Frank Hoppen

END OF THE LINE

One of the great eras in the history of MX came to an abrupt close last year when Joel Smets picked up a career-ending injury at the German GP

Words by Tom Jacobs Photos by Redeye

IT WAS cruel – most injuries are. But when Joel Smets ruptured the ligaments of his right knee during the German GP in Gaildorf last year everyone knew it was more than just an injury.

Smets had successfully bounced back from a life-threatening infection one year earlier and even when nobody had expected the five-time world champ to return to GP racing he did – and made his mark by winning two GP motos in 2005. “Already before my knee injury I had made my mind up about quitting,” says Joel.

“And overall I can’t complain too much about my career!”


Despite his late start – aged 17 – Joel went from a fan behind the fence to earn his place among GP legends like Roger De Coster, Joel Robert, Erik Geboers and Stefan Everts thanks to a brilliant career that saw him win five world titles and take 57 GP victories. And he is also big on personality – ensuring Joel was (and still is) a big hit with fans everywhere – and a great spokesman for his sport, never afraid to question changes from GP promoters Dorna and Youthstream.

Smets always has something valuable to share and talking to him it’s easy to see why

journalists love the guy. “I knew the time would come that I was too old to keep up, that I would lose my strength,” admits the 36-year-old. “I was ready for all of that but I was not prepared for the fire to go away. Just like that. At times during GPs I was thinking to myself ‘come on man, why can’t you go any faster than this?’ – I knew I could go two seconds a lap faster but somehow it was impossible.”

His lack of ambition frustrated the blond giant immensely during 2005 – whether it was an international event, Belgian championship or local race he had always ridden as if a world title was at stake. Smets never backed off.

“Maybe I gave too much and that caused to drain my mental resources. However, I think it’s inevitable in the long run and if you are 36 even more. It does not even matter if you feel young at heart. The shock was big because I could not imagine being without ambition. My illness in 2004 probably played a big part in that process. I was in hospital for a month and for one week I was lying in intensive care. Racing was clearly the last thing on my mind. Heck at one point I was even hallucinating from the heavy painkillers! I just wanted to become healthy again and I would gladly trade my five world titles for that.”



As part of his farewell tour this year Joel will compete in the Belgian championship and selected international events – one of them is the ISDE in New Zealand with the Belgian team. “On one hand it’s a shame that I could not show better form in 2005 but on the other hand I’m proud that I showed that I could still run with the best in spite of my age and my health problems.”

Preparations for his farewell tour have been every bit as meticulous as his GP campaigns. Smets still puts in the long hours and although the idea is to have fun and entertain the crowd he’s deadly serious about it. “It’s weird, I still feel every bit like a racer, it’s hard to describe and I don’t know when it will wear off but that’s how it is. Maybe that’s because I like the lifestyle and the diversity it brings. For example I always enjoyed the fact that being a professional motocross rider I was practising other sports as well.

“Running, cycling, swimming, coordination training or power training...whatever, I simply like sports. I also love the traveling, especially if you can go by camper. After a hard week of preparing going to a race always felt like a holiday to me. You see places and meet people that you otherwise wouldn’t have. I have made friendships for life and that’s something I’m grateful for.

“I’m not sure yet what I will do after my career. For the first two years I will try my hand at some things, see how it works out and make a decision. That could mean setting something up with a sponsor or working with the Belgian federation. To do just one thing seems a little bit scary right now. My intention is also to continue to ride and have fun whether that is on a supermoto or an enduro bike. I also want to do a rally-raid because I love the adventure but I won’t start these races with the same ambition I had in motocross.”

Smets was always very physical on a bike and his riding style often contrasted with the other greats of his era – think super-smooth Stefan Everts – but Joel’s success didn’t just stem from his animal strength. He gave his racing a lot of thought...

“Whether you like it or not motocross is a very complex sport and it’s interesting to see how every rider has a different approach. Take the start for example. Some riders look at the starter or they look at the support bracket at the bottom of the bar. I never did because I was afraid to hit the bar. My reaction time has always been fast enough that I just kept an eye at the top of my bar and I could build my concentration peak to take the snap. Another aspect of the start is how you are carving the first corner, the balance of your throttle, brake and clutch...”

Smets earned himself the nickname ‘Joelshot’ because of his starts but maybe even more spectacular was his ability to recover quickly from a bad position early on. At moments like that his spontaneous riding style would shine through – Smets took lines no-one else saw and he overtook in impossible places.

“For me it has nothing to do with being reckless though,” he explains. “It’s about being extremely decisive, taking decisions in a split second. You commit to a pass and you also accept that sometimes things can go wrong. That’s part of racing.”

Smets produced two of his most memorable races coming back from last place – in Sverepec at the ’95 MX des Nations and Kester’s 500 GP in Y2K. “Sverepec still stands out. By the time I had left the first riders were going into the corner. After just over

Walking away... With five world titles – and the bikes to prove it – Joel Smets has called time on his GP career



Joel's final world title came in the 650cc class in 2003



Joel – pictured here at the Hawkstone International – had high hopes after switching to Suzuki

half-a-lap I sat in 11th place having overtaken 29 riders... Even in tight turns I was berming the outside with my feet on the pegs dragging the handlebars through the ground. After one lap they called for a restart so I was extremely pissed off! Kester was similar but the race just continued. With 15 minutes to go I led."

The 2000 season was without a doubt the pinnacle of Smets' career. More often than not he finished at least 30 seconds ahead of second and he remained unbeaten for 14 heats. The combination of Smets at the height of his powers and – unlike his 1999 Husaberg – the reliable KTM 520SX was formidable.

"Everything worked out great that year but to be honest I did not enjoy the riding so much. If you are winning by a wide margin and you're riding by yourself it's not the same. However, I will never forget how I took the title in Namur. Thousands of fans entered the track, all cheering, jumping or even crying. A sea of people, Belgian flags everywhere! Most of that mental picture comes from magazines and TV images because I did not live that moment very conscious. I was probably still too wrapped up in the race but I would give money to relive it and savour the moment to the fullest."

For Joel the personal highlight of his career was his first world title in 1995. He saw a childhood dream fulfilled when he wrapped it up in the last round of the championship in Reutlingen in Germany after a season-long rivalry with eccentric American Trampas Parker. Years of sacrifice, under-funded campaigns and a lack of respect were forgotten. The underdog had delivered – against all odds – and he finally



More podium celebrations – this time with career-long rival Stefan Everts



made a name for himself in his home country. In a land spoiled with motocross world champions the interest in fourth or third places was minimal.

"Everything around it made that win very emotional. In spite of coming fourth in 1992 as a privateer I wasn't picked up for a factory ride. Not by Honda, nor anyone else. I decided to take a gamble and that's when I turned to four-strokes. For years I basically ran everything to go racing. I trained, I drove to the races, I organized my team with the help of my mechanic and I chased sponsors. Finally to win felt liberating. It's funny how things have come full circle now because the main people who helped me reach my first world title – my trainer Yves Demeulemeester and my technical advisor Ludo Van der Veken – are back with me next year."

When Smets left KTM for Suzuki after his fifth world title (a 650 crown this time) in 2003 he fulfilled another lifelong ambition – to become a factory rider for a Japanese marque. The set-up was comfortable with the Suzuki GP team located only 20 minutes from his house and the new RM-Z450 was promising. With a vast experience in racing four-strokes Joel had a lot to offer to the yellow brand but two big injuries kept him from reaching his potential.

Until then Smets had proved a rock-solid

investment to pick up GP wins – at that point he'd contested 168 consecutive GPs and was rarely injured. But two injury-marred seasons were to follow – although Joel has no regrets.

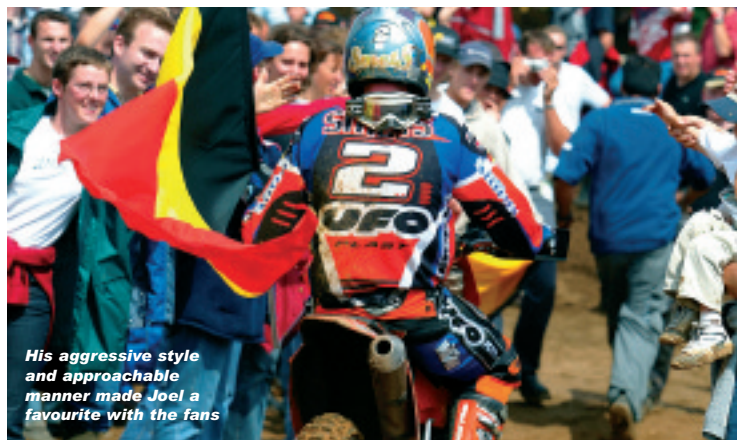
"At the end of 2003 I had several valid options but I was concerned with KTM's rapid growth. The company seemed to lose focus and I knew next year's 450 bike would not have been as competitive as I would like. It was difficult because we had a great marriage and when I left I was the most successful rider in the history of KTM. Aprilia came with a strong offer as well but given their inexperience in motocross and my age Suzuki was the sound decision for me.

"After so many years with European manufacturers it was fascinating to see how the Japanese went about their business. Sadly, the mythical proportions of the factory status – like it was in the '80s – had worn off but it was a great experience nevertheless."

Loyalty and respect are important to Smets and his old school mentality clashed more than once with the opinions of the GP promoters – especially under the Dorna reign when the world championship switched from a two-race format to just a single moto. More drastic changes have continued with Giuseppe Luongo's Youthstream in command of the world championship and not all are seen as positive.



*Celebrating in Holland
in 2003 in fine style*



*His aggressive style
and approachable
manner made Joel a
favourite with the fans*



"Don't get me wrong, it's only natural that our sport had to develop and become more professional. I completely acknowledge the fact that marketing and TV are important for any professional sport but I don't think we should sell our soul for it. Admittedly, it's a difficult job to promote a small sport like motocross and I do believe some things have improved.

"Escalating ticket prizes, the one-race format, abandoning of qualifying and prize money, commerce and sporting values tangled together have harmed motocross. As a struggling GP rider I literally made it from one GP to another with the prize money I had collected the week before. Even entering a GP is a lot more difficult than it used to be and not only because of the prize money.

"Now only 30 riders are allowed to start and if you are not in a team chances are that you are not even allowed to qualify. For a young privateer the situation is looking very bleak."

Unhappy with the politics in GP MX, in 2001 Smets toyed with moving Stateside and opting for an outdoor-only contract with KTM. But disappointing results in the Southwick national that year changed his mind in the end. "It's true that the tense relationship with Dorna cost me a lot of energy but I would not go as far to say that it kept me from a world title. To be honest I think it just fueled my desire to win!"

True to form Smets refused to obey a gesticulating Dorna manager in Valkenswaard in 2001 who signaled him to pull into the podium area after he had crossed the finish line. Previously riders had to perform a victory lap with the flag of their country but by this time it wasn't considered beneficial for the show. Smets agreed to disagree on the subject and made a lap of honour – much to the delight of the fans. Just one small story from many how the hard-riding, straight-talking Belgian made fans all over the world.

"Fans mean a lot to me, probably because I have been one myself for so long. I'm not sure whether the cheering of the fans makes me stronger but I do enjoy the attention and the opportunity we have to move people. In the end sport is all about emotion. You know, when I'm on a track without people around it almost feels as if I'm naked!"

And it's not just his upbringing in a motocross-mad family that's helped him relate to fans. He also speaks five languages – a big help when it comes to communicating. "Especially in places like France or Italy it's largely appreciated if you speak their language. It allows you to communicate on a more personal level. However, to be popular you also have to perform and I can say that I gave it my best shot everywhere and that I have won races all over the world.

"I never had big arguments with anyone – except with promoters maybe. I always speak my mind but I forget quickly. I have put a lot into it but motocross has also brought me a great deal. So if I had the choice I would definitely do it again."



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So what's next for Smets?
The Belgian's planning
a farewell season of
selected internationals –
including the ISDE in New
Zealand – in 2006



Top six rivals

STEFAN EVERTS

"What can I say about Stefan that hasn't been said before? Over a season he is just so damn regular. I've beaten him often but even when I had few low scores in the championship he was more consistent. We have very different personalities and our background could not be more different either – Stefan was almost world champion when I started.

"The mutual respect has grown over the years and we can appreciate each other now. Of course we had our share of arguments but at times we also have played it up for the Belgian press to generate interest for our sport! I'm sure it helped us to gain awareness."

RICKY CARMICHAEL

"Unfortunately I only competed against Ricky a few times. He's also a rider with a different kind of style and he really puts his heart into it. That is something I can relate to. He has always been special but his progress over the years has been impressive as well. "When I saw him in Brazil (MX of Nations 1999) sitting at the pool I was amazed. He didn't look like a

professional athlete – he was more like a small Michelin man – but now he's a real athlete. I'm not so big on memorabilia but I'm quite proud of the signed shirt Ricky gave me in Ernee last year. I think it's cool how he has been promoting our sport and he has also been a great ambassador for the MX of Nations."

TRAMPAS PARKER

"I enjoyed many exciting battles with Trampas, especially in 1995 when we fought for the world title together. He was hard but never dirty although he had some special tricks in his bag. He would suddenly brake in a corner so you would hit his rear wheel and then he would accelerate.

"He was an interesting character as well. I remember a jury meeting in Austria where the riders discussed a slightly dangerous section of the track. The jury president happened to be a woman, we were standing in a circle and Trampas threw a tampon in the middle as if to say that all who thought this was dangerous were girly. He probably did it to intimidate people but I found it hilarious."

SHAYNE AND DARRYLL KING

"Another pair of hard knockers. Most of the time Australian or Kiwi riders who come to Europe or America have a great mentality. They will give it everything while they are here.

"Darryll and his younger brother were both more talented than me but usually I was faster. Shayne won the title in 1996 and that was one of those years where I actually beat myself. For the first time I felt the pressure of riding with the #1 plate, I made a lot of mistakes and injured myself."

MICKAEAL PICHON

"I had a lot of good fights with Mickael, not so much in the world championship but certainly in international races. He was great to race with and technically he's very strong. I think following guys like him and Stefan also helped me polish my riding style, at least a bit! "Pichon is often misunderstood but he's actually a nice guy. It's just that he finds it difficult to handle pressure I think. I felt sorry for him when I took his place at Suzuki but there was not much I could do about it."



Milway impresses
Mr Miyagi

DAMAGE LIMITATION

While it's virtually impossible to prevent injuries there are practical ways to minimise their impact and speed the recovery process

Words by Alan Milway Photo by Paul Thomas

medical milway

Alan Milway is a qualified sports scientist who runs MX Fitness specialising in training motocross and enduro riders. For more information on how Alan can help you train go to his website www.mxfitness.co.uk or call him on 07810 827427

GETTING INJURED doing something you love is no fun at all but what makes it worse is being kept away from being able to race. Injuries are part and parcel of sport and some sports are more prone to dishing out injuries than others.

Motocross riders must be well up there on the list of most injured sportsmen and I often have calls from riders I've been training to tell me of their latest broken bone or dislocation.

Injuries are most often caused by crashes – and preventing crashes is clearly hard to do without using tired clichés like 'slow down' or 'ride within your limits'. I'm not your mum and I want you to win too! But there are more realistic ways to reduce the risk.

Going to the line without warming up properly is asking for trouble. If you're not warmed up then the range of motion of joints is reduced and this will increase the chance of dislocating, for example, a shoulder.

Riding when tired is another big cause of crashes. Fatigue greatly affects concentration but fatigue is part and parcel of racing so prepare for it – you know what you're going to be up against so do the appropriate training! If you're practising try taking more frequent breaks for drinks as you will ultimately be able to go for longer and feel fresher.

There is one rider who is said to be very lucky when it comes to injuries and that's Ricky Carmichael. He hasn't missed an AMA National in years and once managed to hold out until the

end of a season before going under the knife to repair a damaged cruciate ligament. He then bounced back even stronger than before.

He may indeed be lucky but I think to a certain extent you make your own luck and pure strength and fitness keeps him in control where others wouldn't have the energy to hang on.

Building up muscle strength therefore does go towards preventing injury and also goes a long way to stabilising the joint it acts upon. This increased joint stability helps resist dislocations and also hyper extensions.

Recovery from injuries is something we all want to do faster, more effectively and with as little pain as possible. Friends re-runs are all well and good but couch time is never fun.

The first thing to do when injured is follow the simple RICE principle – Rest immediately, Ice the injured site, put Compression onto the area with strapping and Elevate. This will help with pain and swelling and if done promptly will help reduce injury time.

Try to see a professional as soon as possible as quick diagnosis is one of the best ways to treat an injury correctly. Ignoring it and just moaning about the discomfort won't help anyone and could lengthen recovery time.

Upper body injuries like A/C separations, shoulder dislocations and broken wrists all require sufficient time of immobilisation. However, there is nothing to stop you continuing to remain active and doing some training. It is



Eat ****t Bry Mac!

© Hing Suttty

only the injury that needs to be rested. Light cardio work on a stationary bike or light running are very effective ways to keep your fitness from taking a dive. With these injuries it is important to regain a good range of motion about the joint and build muscle strength around it.

It is important to take advice from your doctor but on many occasions a GP's treatment protocol will be very conservative so a sports injury specialist would be a good port of call.

Training can commence early and will help promote recovery without further damaging the injury, getting you back on the bike as soon as possible. Gradual build up is important and starting off, for example, with elastic exercise band exercises and moving on to light dog bone free weights will help develop the surrounding muscles that support and stabilise the joint.

You can also use this time to work on strength for other areas – lower body and core stability are both areas that could be trained if you have upper extremity injury and improved to levels better than before the injury.

For lower extremity injuries it is harder to maintain general cardio fitness. Casts obviously have great limiting factors but if you are not in a cast, weight bearing exercises that offer little joint stress will help promote recovery. Rowing machines, swimming (or even aqua walking/running) and stationary bikes will increase blood flow to the area, build muscular

strength and increase some weight bearing which is an important phase in recovery.

You must clearly take advice from your doctor but try to see a sports injury specialist as they will have a much better understanding of your needs. In an age where pins are inserted into bones and casts may even be left off, recovery time is reduced. As long as you don't do anything risky that might cause a fall or is too high intensity too early you can be active soon after injury.

As an example, for a knee injury the strengthening of the leg muscles is important to stabilise and protect the joint. And improving this strength from what it was before the injury will also help prevent re-occurrence of the injury.

Also focus on building up proprioceptive awareness again. This is the knowledge of what the limb is doing with regard to position, joint angle etc and although this is often good when riding and training an injury lay off will reduce this awareness and this must be regained. Balance boards, single leg squats and balance exercises with your eyes shut will greatly help this. Lay off running but build strength through weights work, cycling and the cross trainer machine.

You can monitor progress by comparing the results of each exercise between the injured and non-injured leg. Do not try to match the non-injured limb but gradually note

improvements. As you recover from the injury you can see how fit and recovered you are by the performance percentage compared to the non-injured limb. Once up to around 80 per cent you can start to reintroduce your normal exercises.

If you are unfortunate to suffer an injury then once swelling and pain have subsided, gradual light work can begin. Keeping active while protecting the injured limb or joint will keep your cardio fitness good, motivation up and reduce the worry that the hard work of before the injury was wasted.

Finding ways to speed up your recovery are not only a physical benefit but also a mental boost as you won't feel so helpless. Gyms often have exercise classes that are graded for ability or fitness. Going to an entry level class would help in rehab and use some of the weights machines to gain range of motion before moving on to the free weights to build more strength and stability.

As with any injury please do seek medical help first and follow the doctor's guidelines. And ask them questions so you get a good understanding and use this advice to help your recovery.

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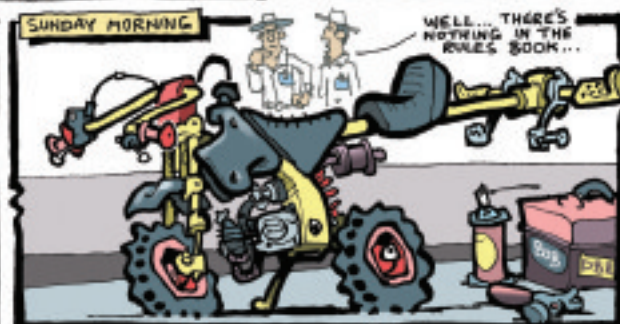
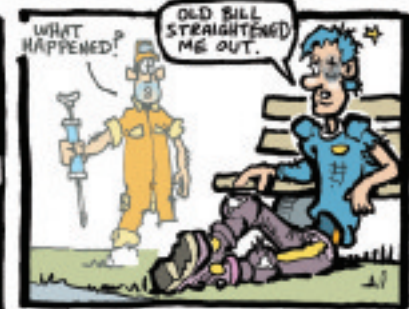
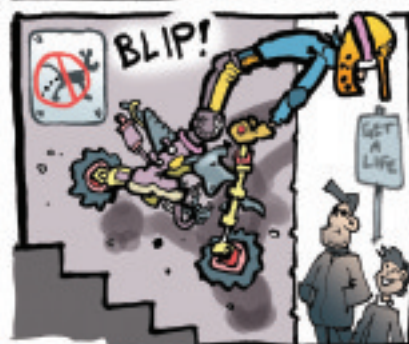
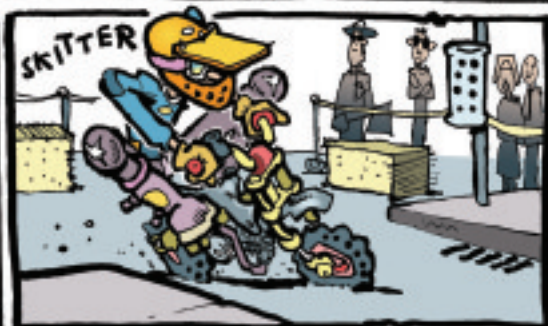
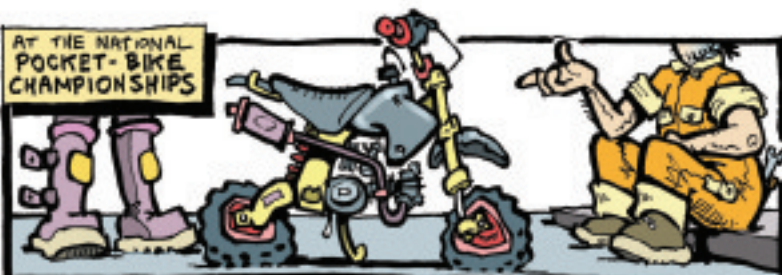
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steve cox



Steve Cox is an American moto-journo who follows the entire AMA SX/MX tour. A staffer at famed US weekly Cycle News for over four years before striking out on his own to do the freelance thing, Steve's an ex-pro motocross racer so he can ride as well as write. He knows the sport and its personalities like few others and as our US Editor provides top-level insight and features fresh from the Stateside scene...



SENIOR CITIZEN!

At 31 years of age Nathan Ramsey is a man among children in 125cc supercross – lucky for him then that he still feels 25...

Words and photos by STEVE COX

RAMSEY SHOWS HE MEANS BUSINESS IN '06 WITH THE LITES WIN IN VANCOUVER



NATHAN RAMSEY IS 14 YEARS DAVI MILLSAPS' SENIOR. EVEN SO, HE WON AS MANY 125cc SUPERCROSS RACES LAST YEAR AS ANYONE AND IF NOT FOR A STALLED BIKE THAT WOULDN'T RE-FIRE AT ROUND TWO IN PHOENIX HE MAY HAVE WON THE TITLE FROM IVAN TEDESCO. BUT HE DIDN'T. COMING INTO THIS SEASON, HIS FOCUS IS ON THE 125cc WESTERN REGIONAL SX SERIES – AND SO IS RED BULL KTM'S.

DBR: You have to feel pretty confident coming into this season when last season, without the stall at Phoenix, you probably would've won it.

N8: "Yeah, I had that race and then San Francisco wasn't the best for me either but I'm confident. I've been around enough to know where I need to be and I have a solid programme with lots of good people behind me and the KTM's even better this year. Last year it was new and it was good but we were a little bit behind the whole time with it but we're making big strides this year. "I feel awesome. I took a little bit of time during the Nationals and got a few things fixed that had been bugging me for some time and it was a good choice. When I came back everything felt better and my enthusiasm was back and the off-season went as

scripted. Everything I planned has gone that way. I have nothing to complain about."

DBR: What was bothering you?

N8: "My wrist was bugging me – it ended up being some torn ligaments – and I had a cyst on the outside of my wrist and some cartilage in between there so it was a few things going on that were causing some problems. I couldn't hold on as good and had to adjust my riding style. I was also pretty deep into the anti-inflammatories and I don't like to do that. It was just one of those decisions that we all put our heads together and it

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NATHAN RAMSEY **interview**

made sense to do that so I wouldn't waste the off-season recovering and it paid off. I feel great, my wrist feels good and I think I'll be ready to go when it's time to race."

DBR: Coming into last season your team manager Larry Brooks was saying that your team is focusing on supercross for KTM. They want to win supercross championships. So it makes pretty good sense that you would take off a few Nationals when you're an SX title hopeful, right?

N8: "Yeah. The point I was at toward the end of the season, even if I would've climbed up the points a little bit, it wouldn't have made a big difference. Everyone wants to do good and I wanted to sort of redeem myself but the way I was physically it was tougher than it should've been. But it was tough to swallow because I was brought up to never be a quitter and, although I didn't really quit, that's the way it seems. "So the guys sort of told me it's not quitting, it's making a smart decision for the future instead of thinking about the next race. Hopefully it'll pay off once we get to the series."

"KTM and Red Bull are serious about winning a supercross championship and we came pretty close last year on both coasts so maybe next year we'll step up."



**AT 31 YEARS OLD
RAMSEY'S THE
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OF SUPERCROSS**



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DBR: Before Mike Alessi's penalty you guys finished second in every championship last year.

N8: "Oh yeah, that's pretty cool. For me being a part of KTM has been great. I've been around the block with companies and I think Larry is awesome. Everybody that plays a part in it are great – it's a great company to work for [he has ridden for just about everyone – Suzuki in '97 before Pro Circuit, Team Honda, Yamaha of Troy and KTM]. I've done 'em all except for Husky. It sounds bad but at each place I left on good terms. That's the good thing about it to ride for all these places and get that experience."

DBR: Aren't you coming up on 30?

N8: "I've already past it. I'm actually 31 now."

DBR: I think that would be a surprise to a lot of people, actually, not just me.

N8: "Yeah, you know, I don't feel 30 and I guess a lot of people think of me as younger than 31 but it's just a number to me. I always tell people that as long as I'm 25 on the bike, I'm 25. But I think that the way that athletes are nowadays and the science we have behind our training and our whole programme it's allowing us to go so much further – you can be at an age where you can be smarter and still have the physical body to put it to use. That's where I feel like I'm at. I'm going to keep going until I can't go no more!"

DBR: Maybe 15 years ago your wrist injury may have done it for your career don't you think?




**ON THE PODIUM
FLANKED BY
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N8: "You know what? It's pretty amazing. I was talking to someone about it the other day and they were like 'you're going to be hurting so bad when you're older – you're going to have arthritis and this and that'. I can only speak for myself but with Jeff Spencer [US training guru] behind me and a lot of doctors I feel better now. I used to have all kinds of things ailing me all the time – little things hurting me. Now my body has gotten better because we've gotten smarter about how to handle it and how to fix it. I used to think I was going to be hurting when I get old but now I don't think so. I think I'm going to be fine."

DBR: What about racing with all of these young pups?

N8: "It's never easy. Every year I've got to keep on pushing and making changes. I've got a lot of good people behind me and Jeff Spencer has a lot of wisdom to push me to the next level and I hired a riding coach this year – Buddy Antunez – and we've been working on a

whole lot of things. I figure if these guys are young and they've got a few new tricks, then I've got to do that myself. I'm working on that along with everybody at Red Bull KTM. The bike's just getting better and better. You've got such a good push behind you – such a good team – that it's hard to let them down. Good surroundings." 



SHOCKER!

After an uphill battle in '05 James Stewart turns the world on its head with a double in Canada as the World SX GP series kicks off

Words and photos by STEVE COX

IT'S NO SECRET THAT JAMES STEWART HAS BEEN FIGHTING AN UPHILL BATTLE FOR MOST OF 2005. AFTER CRASHING FIVE TIMES IN THE MUD AT ANAHEIM I HE WENT TO PHOENIX FOR ROUND TWO OF THE AMA SX SERIES AND BROKE HIS ARM.

HE RETURNED TO WIN EVERY SINGLE SX HE DIDN'T CRASH IN (THREE IN TOTAL), THEN HEADED OUTDOORS AND BATTLED SICKNESSES AND CRASHES THROUGHOUT – ULTIMATELY MISSING MOST OF THE SEASON AFTER LANDING ON RICKY CARMICHAEL AT UNADILLA. HE RETURNED ON THE KX250 FOR THE US OPEN BUT NEVER MADE IT ONTO THE TRACK AFTER GETTING SICK AND BEING TAKEN OUT OF THE PITS IN AN AMBULANCE BEFORE PRACTICE.

That was less than two months before the opening round of the AMP'D Mobile World Supercross GP series in Toronto where not only would he be racing, he would be racing on a brand-new bike – the KX450F.

Surely he wouldn't be able to beat the unstoppable Ricky Carmichael and 2004 AMA SX champ Chad Reed...right? That's a logical assumption but James Stewart isn't your average rider.

After dominating his heat race over RC, Stewart rounds the first turn just behind team-mate Michael Byrne and is quickly into the lead. But in a flash of his former self, Stewart goes down while running away out front. "This track was pretty rocky tonight and I hit a rock going into the first corner," Stewart says, "but I kept the bike going and just got back around Chad and set my sights on Ricky."

Carmichael assumes the lead with Reed second but Stewart immediately goes to work, going past Reed and heading off after Carmichael. He catches Carmichael by the halfway point and then it seems as if he begins toying with the defending champ. He passes Carmichael, then inexplicably lets him back by.

"James was obviously faster than me. You guys could see that," says Carmichael. "He was letting me go. He'd pass me and then slow down and not jump doubles and I'd go back by him and, I don't know, I guess he was just playing with me. But if I was him I'd have just tried to pass me and go on with it."

Stewart says he merely wants to stay behind Carmichael because he wants to learn from him. "These races are warm-up races," explains Stewart. "We take 'em serious but the more information I can learn from this guy, it's going to make me that much better. I knew I had to get him before the chequered flag came out, otherwise all that was for nothing. But I felt really strong tonight. I just wanted to sit behind him and follow him around. I didn't want to get around him and have him follow my lines."

And with two laps to go Stewart makes a move stick and takes off for the victory. His patience pays off. He has not always been known for patience.

"I think basically that was the old James Stewart – just go out there and race," says Stewart, who laps up to sixth place in the 20-lap race. "But I want to go 18 races and I'm really focusing on the track, watching the videos between practices and I'm finding some good lines out there that I know with the way the track deteriorates, it's going to be great toward the end. It's the first real supercross for the KX450 and we got two holeshots."

Carmichael hangs on for second. "It seems like every new generation there's a new style and I'm just trying to adapt. I really believe that my line selection needs to be a little bit better. Maybe that's what I need to work on. And I want to stay healthy. It's a long season. I can go a little bit



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faster but you can only do what your bike will allow you to do. I was riding it the best that I could and it got me second place tonight."

Reed finishes a rather distant third on his YZ450F debut. "We're here for a reason and the reality is this is a warm-up race," he says. "We have a lot of things to achieve and I think we achieved a lot this weekend. Things are going well. They didn't look so well and they didn't feel so great but I think overall it was a good weekend."

It only gets worse for the competition in Vancouver as Carmichael gets another poor start while Stewart gets away again out front.

"I don't know what the problem is," Carmichael says of his poor starts in Canada.

"That's not really putting yourself in a great position to at least get up there and do battle and it really made for a boring

race for the fans and everybody watching if they wanted to see a race for the lead because James was gone."

Carmichael works his way pretty quickly through the pack and within only a couple of laps he's battling with Reed for third. By around the five-lap mark he makes a pass stick on Reed and then follows that with a quick pass on second-placed David Vuillemin in the very next corner. From there it seems both Stewart and Carmichael are racing the stopwatch.

"I saw he was closing and stuff like that but I just wanted to win the race," says Stewart.

"For sure, he definitely got held up by lappers but I don't think I did quite as bad because being the second guy they kind of move out of the way so he got held up a little worse than I did," Carmichael says. "But man, I just tried to put in some good laps. He would inch away and we'd kind of stay the same and it was kind of back and forth but I was eight seconds behind. I just would like to get up there in the battle like last week."

Stewart holds on to take the victory with about 10 seconds to spare over Carmichael with Reed getting by Vuillemin for third.

"I felt much better on the bike," Reed explains. "Last weekend I don't know what happened, I just didn't feel that great on the bike. The result wasn't a whole lot better but I definitely felt better on the bike. The race was kind of a

little hectic there at the beginning. Me and Ricky were kind of banging bars and it kind of felt like we were in the 125 class. But it was fun to get out there and race."

Carmichael feels like he met his goals – except winning, of course. "I think all of us up here come to win, for sure," he says. "It's part of the world series and you definitely want to win the world title. But I will say that with my training and everything I'm not planning to peak at these two events, that's for sure – if I was I would've started my training right after Glen Helen. But that's no excuse. I definitely think I will be better in Anaheim along with everybody else."

"We have some work to do and I think the goal is the same. I'm happy with what I'm doing – I'm riding my race and I'm not making too many mistakes. I just want there to be good racing. The sport needs good racing. In order to grow, we're going to have to have good racing."

With two races on his KX450F, Stewart now has two wins. "I'm going to go back and continue doing the same thing," Stewart says of what he's going to do between Vancouver and Anaheim. "Right now it's working and I got to learn a whole lot when I'm racing Ricky. I must've watched that tape 150 times over the week and I'm learning a lot. It's my second year in 250s and it's the second time I rode this motorcycle in a race. I'm learning every week."



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AMP'D MOBILE WORLD SX

Series Standings

1	James Stewart	50 points (2 wins)
2	Ricky Carmichael	44
3	Chad Reed	40
4	Ivan Tedesco	36
5	Michael Byrne	31
6	Nick Wey	29
7	Jason Thomas	28
8	Jeff Gibson	23
9	Justin Buckelew	21
10	Ryan Clark	18

MILLSAPS WINS IN TORONTO BEFORE TAKING SECOND IN VANCOUVER

EARLY WARNING

Millsaps and Ramsey set the pace in SX Lites

With no points offered for the (ahem) 'Supercross Lites' class in Canada, only a few of the top guys turn up – but enough do to show us who are likely to be the riders to beat in 2006.

Toronto is a showcase for new Honda pilot Davi Millsaps as he comes from outside the top five to take a seemingly easy win over Josh Hansen and Billy Laninovich after Nathan Ramsey drops out of the race when he runs into Millsaps' rear wheel and highsides. Andrew Short leads early until his CRF locks up over a jump, sending him into the stands.

"I kind of bogged off the start – like normal, whatever – but I rode my way through the pack," Millsaps says.

"It's not the way I wanted to win it with Short going out but I'll take it."

Millsaps is once again fastest in Vancouver practice but a poor start in the Main Event makes the going hard for him as Ramsey grabs the holeshot and takes off with it.

Millsaps starts outside the top 15 in the 15-lap race. But by lap 10 Millsaps sits second and begins chipping away at Ramsey's lead, only to come up just a couple of seconds short at the finish. "You can't tell who's going super-hard in practice," Ramsey says. "There have been times when I had the fastest lap times and lost and times when I was two seconds off the pace and won.

"I've just been practising my starts and I knew that first rhythm section was going to be messy so when I got the start I was pumped that I could control that section. I let everyone stay closer than I liked but it's okay. Getting the start takes a lot of risk out of it because it becomes you and the track instead of everyone going every direction." "I felt bad and won last weekend and I felt good and lost this weekend," Millsaps shrugs. "Go figure..."

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words by **JEFF KOCAN** courtesy of RacerX photo by **STEVE COX**

FRESH START!

With a new number signalling a new beginning, James Stewart drops the hammer for two wins in Canada

What a month! While I'm probably the last person you would describe as an optimist, I can honestly say that this is the most excited I've been for a new season in recent memory.

Much of my good cheer stems from a certain 'New Beginning' in Canada. Those were the words patched across James Stewart's posterior when he made his Amp'd Mobile World Supercross GP debut in December – and they couldn't have been more appropriate. As he revealed his new persona – shying away from the Bubba nickname and his traditional #259 – in favour of a clean slate, James dropped the hammer for two big wins up north and gave us fans a whole lot more to talk about for the upcoming AMA SX season.

Stewart's wins – at Toronto's Rogers Centre and Vancouver's BC Place – impressed mainly because they came from a truly different rider than the Bubba of old, prompting nearly everyone who witnessed them to throw out words like 'calm', 'patient' and even 'mature'. New beginning? More like a new person.

Defending champion Ricky Carmichael was gracious and honest in defeat, saying on the podium that he "didn't have nothing for" Stewart in Toronto. But beneath his cool exterior RC couldn't have been too pleased. He's a born winner and dropping both World SX rounds will only make him more determined to find the next gear. While he admitted James was the faster man in Canada, Ricky was sure to qualify that with a friendly "let's not give the trophy away yet".

One person who won't be getting that trophy is SoBe/Samsung Mobile Honda's Kevin Windham who broke his arm while testing at the Honda track in California in mid-December. It's yet another tough blow for K-Dub who underwent surgery immediately after the crash. There's no word on when he'll be ready to race again but I wouldn't be surprised if he decided to sit out the series altogether for a fresh start in the outdoor Nationals.

Windham's absence is a big blow to the '06 season on a couple of levels. A perennial championship contender and vital ingredient of the 'Perfect Storm' scenario, Kevin has long been one of the sport's most popular riders. A true fan favourite with style to burn, he simply makes the races better. While not a dominant rider in the Carmichael or McGrath mold, he is a threat to win any race he enters.

But K-Dub was also going to be a sort of benchmark this season. While just about every rider in the premier class – including Carmichael, Stewart, Chad Reed, Ivan Tedesco, Nick Wey, and Michael Byrne – has switched to 450cc four-strokes for supercross, Windham has been racing his CRF450R indoors since 2004. He won five races that year, then took the win at the muddy 2005 Anaheim season-opener. Windham didn't go to Canada in December, preferring to stay in California and prepare for the AMA series, so

January's Anaheim 1 would have been the first chance for the field to test themselves against a proven, experienced and fast four-stroke supercross rider. But while that would have been an interesting compare-and-contrast, I doubt you'll hear too many of Windham's competitors complaining all that loudly.


It wouldn't be the start of a new year without a little controversy but this time around it's a bit different. New SX series title sponsor Amp'd Mobile's television advertising campaign has come under fire from some fans. One features an overdosed rock star twitching on his hotel room floor, with a maid berating his stupidity – now he'll miss out on the new Amp'd phones – while the other shows an aged senator being revived by a prostitute so that he might survive to enjoy the new technology. The tag line for the ad campaign? 'Don't die'. Fearing that the ads could tarnish the sport's perceived family-friendly image – what kind of message are we sending to the children? – one fan actually started a drive to boycott Amp'd Mobile before their phones even hit the market.

I'm not sure how it works in the UK but here in the States we like our outrage. When we have nothing to be outraged about we make something up – the 'War on Christmas', the 'War on Religion' or 'Weapons of Mass Destruction' for example. But this one is my current favourite. A rock star does drugs...and dies. A politician cheats on his wife...and dies. What message are we sending to the children? Bad things will kill you but a new mobile phone is worth living for. That's the American way – live as long as possible and buy as much stuff as you can. That's the stuff dreams are made of.

The bottom line is we've got a new title sponsor that has made a commitment to bring some funky new



gadgetry to supercross. Will they be in the sport for the long haul? Who knows? But they're here now and they seem to want to help. Let's give them the benefit of the doubt.

Besides, if you really want controversy that badly the Alessi family are also in the sport and they're here to stay for sure. It really is going to be a great year. 

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WALKER'S WORLD DRIVE TIME!

**Running a knackered chain and sprockets is a
recipe for disaster – luckily, help is at hand...**

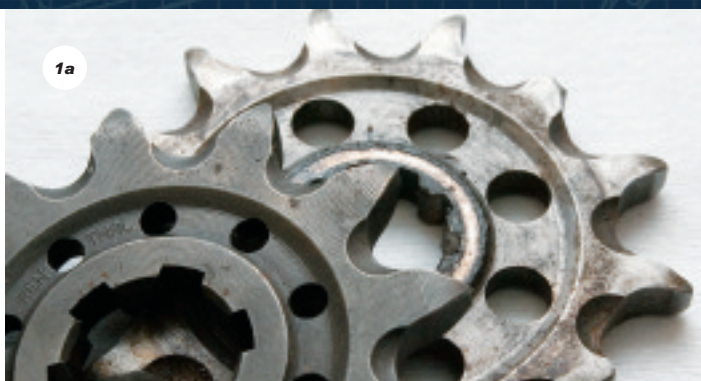
Words by Geoff Walker Photos by Ray Chuss and Suttty

THIS PART of the bike is often overlooked and riding conditions at this time of the year are the worst for wearing out your sprockets and drive chain. Excessive wear in this department can cause a few problems such as a thrown chain, a bit of slippage or even broken crankcases.

When the chain is worn – or even if it's just loose – it will have a lot of extra movement which can allow rocks to get between the chain and final drive sprocket causing damage to the crankcases. When this happens you may well be asking the bank manager for a wee loan (that's a small loan and not a bizarre transaction of the golden shower type – Suttty).

Fitting a chain and sprockets is pretty simple and if you take your time you'll have no problems at all with this little job. All you're gonna need is a rear wheel spanner, 6 or 8mm Allen key, 12/13mm combi spanner, 12/14mm socket, circlip pliers, chain cutter, flat pliers and an 8mm t-bar.





1 This gives you an idea of how the old sprockets and chain look next to new stuff. You can see the hooked and broken teeth on the sprockets and the amount of excess sideways flex on the old chain.

2 Take the flat pliers and locate the joining link on the chain. Hold the wheel in place and firmly press the holding flight out of its groove. The flight will snap back out of place.

3 The front chain guide needs to be removed to get at the final drive sprocket. Whip this off and then use the circlip pliers to remove the retaining clip on the sprocket. Not all front

sprockets are held in position with a clip. Some are bolted on. If your sprocket is bolted on, simply slip your bike into gear before you take your chain off and with the correct socket in place just sharply tap the socket with your hand to loosen the bolt.

4 The collar and o-ring behind the sprocket collect a lot of crud. When the drive sprocket is off make sure you check the seal, collar and o-ring. When all is clean, lightly grease the o-ring and replace it with the collar.

5 Slip your new sprocket into place and carefully replace the clip into its locating

position. It is obviously really important to get the clip securely down into the locating step – check this!

6 Remove the rear wheel. My tip for easy rear sprocket removal is this. Hold your wheel in a secure way and crack each one of the 12mm sprocket bolts loose with the combi spanner. They will just move a fraction each but this is enough to then easily remove with the use of the Allen key and spanner.

7 With the rear sprocket off fit the new one. At this point I spin the sprocket back and forward to make sure it seats into place.

GEOFF WALKER's one of the most respected MX technicians in the country (well, so he tells us) with a CV that reads like a who's who of British MX. In all the years he's been in the game, the 43-year-old Irishman's spun spanners for the likes of Carl Nunn, Tom Church, Mark Hucklebridge, Robbie Herring, Philippe Dupasquier and Sully.

During this time he's worked for JHK Kawasaki Japan, Kawasaki UK, Bott KTM and RWJ HRC Honda where he helped Herring to the '96 British Open title. A former racer and Pro-ranked downhill MTBer, Geoff's notoriously inept at getting his copy and photos in on time, causing huge headaches in the DBR office – but we still love/tolerate his big-chinned Oirishness...



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8 Place all the bolts into their positions and tighten until snug making sure you tighten numbers one, three and five before tightening numbers two, four and six. This ensures that the sprocket is seated correctly in place. If you are going enduro or trail riding use a little thread lock to keep the bolts in place.

9 Pop the wheel back into the bike and make sure the adjusters are towards the front of their adjustment before you thread your new chain into place as shown. Try not to get any crap on the chain by holding it up like the picture shows (previous page).

10 Generally you want the adjusters to be just forward of the middle when the chain is

newly fitted. This gives you enough adjustment for the chain's life expectancy. With the chain in place and the wheel approximately in position you can work out exactly where you will need to cut the chain. Make sure you take your time at this point and only cut the chain when you are 100 per cent sure you are in the correct place. When the chain is cut you should have two ends with the holes exposed to slip the new joining link into.

11 Slip the joining link into place before placing the outer plate into position. The flight **MUST** be placed and clipped into its position in the direction shown. This is to stop the flight being 'pinged-off' while the chain is running forwards.

12 The chain should now be adjusted as shown. Place three fingers under the chain at the back of the chain slipper rubber and adjust until your fingers are a good tight fit. You must make sure **BOTH** sides are adjusted to the exact same distance as the chain must run in an exact straight line or excessive wear and stress will occur.

13 Place something soft between the chain and sprocket and slowly place under tension to make sure the wheel adjusters are pulled back into place as you tighten the rear wheel. With your sparkly new parts fitted and your chain perfectly adjusted and all locked into place you just need to get on out there and start twistin' that throttle!



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Stupidcross!

OUR TIP-TOP TECH TAKES A SUPERCROSS CRASH COURSE AT CARDIFF

"It's been emotional!" Those were my carefully chosen words to Suttty and Scotty C after the Cardiff Supercross had come to an end. I'm not really an emotional person but I find that after I risk life and limb in an attempt to write a feature and entertain my fellow humans I get a little choked for a few minutes. When Hung-Suttty originally called me to demand that I do the SX there was fear in my heart and the nerves were kicking in. It didn't help that when I got there I had to take more than a little stick.

"Who are you spannner for Geoff?"

"I'm riding!"

"You're what?"

[raucous laughter followed by uncomfortable silence]

Along with the immortal 'was that it' coming from a close lady friend they have to be the worst words a man can hear when it comes to making him feel good!

The KX looked the nuts as it sat there in our work bay and the track looked absolutely awesome although things were looking a little big for my liking. We got to turn a few laps on the Friday night and as I sat trackside warming the KX up for my first practice I almost turned the puppy round and backed on outta there!

I made the mistake of watching the Alessis who made things look pretty easy but also pretty big! I ride in the woods and up rivers and mountains – what the hell was I doing here?

Practice went okay as most of it was spent under waved yellow flags so I had a great excuse for not going for any of the big jumps. The KX hadn't been ridden before I rolled out onto the track so I was going to take it steady no matter what. The bike felt new and that was strange for a while but as each lap went by the motor started to loosen up and I could start to feel that great meaty controllable power.

The suspension felt good but I knew I would have to try to up the speed to get the best from the bike as it was ready to perform well above my level. As my session came to an end I couldn't believe how many people were being carted off from the track.

Alex Rach had come past me like I was in reverse on lap one and spent the rest of the session on the deck trying to find his knackers and Wildman Walsh hit the eject button after the step-on, step-off section! So it was steady away being the best way forward for this Irishman!

Saturday was the big day and to make matters worse our practice was being put off until later and later. More and more people were arriving down in the pits and with my SX mentors Suttty and McCann on hand I actually started to believe I could do the big finish line triple!

The KX felt absolutely awesome as I rolled out on the first lap. Everything felt perfect, the motor, the chassis, the tyres – everything – so I felt surprisingly cool as I checked the point and line for my take-off as I had discussed with Sutt Dawg and Scotty C.

Lap two came around all too quickly but everything felt good so I hooked third, cut into my line and rolled it on. The bike felt great as we flew, balanced and controlled. There is no feeling like it in the world and the KX with me along as a passenger floated across the 90ft gap and I felt like Bubba. It was just amazing. Some people are born to jump but I'm not so this was absolutely fantastic.

The rest of the lap flowed beautifully. I actually attacked the track and it felt great. As I approached the triple to start the next lap I decided not to go for it, just to calm down and work out the next section to ride faster. About 15 metres before the take-off I thought ***k it – I can do it from this inside line! Bad move! Really bad move! In fact one of my most monumental bad moves (and there have been many)!

I whacked the power on instead of rolling it on and got a little wheel spin – seat bumping was my last option but as I took off that just sent me skywards. Things didn't look good and I went into some kind of suspended animation. It felt like I was just gonna keep going up. Everything stopped and I looked down – a long way down – took a deep breath and tried to relax before landing. I only came up a couple of feet short but the angle I came down at was enough to stop me dead as I landed frame first. I don't remember much else but Suttty reckons I was still stuck in my riding position, just a couple of feet above the bike. My bell had been well and truly rung and I didn't know what day of the week it was.

Even though the pain was immense I couldn't help but feel a certain level of euphoria at the fact I had jumped the thing at least once.

Suttty and Moocann were on hand in a flash and after checking to make sure I had some teeth left and I could move most of my body I just wanted to get back to the pit and see if me and Arch could straighten the bike to carry on with practice.

We just got it pretty straight when the chequers came out and it was at this point I sat down and felt real sick. Adrenaline is a great thing and that is what our sport is built on – there are no weak people in the sport as it takes balls to get the skidder on and get out there, no matter what level you ride at.

I had a sinking feeling as I thought I had screwed it up and I wouldn't get to race in the evening programme in front of all the people. The crew at 661 had sent me some ankle braces through so I managed to get my right boot off and fixed the ankle brace into place to keep the swelling under control. Being able to feel my toes was a distant memory but with the boot back on and a few painkillers down my neck I figured I could at least try to ride.

About 30 minutes before my heat race I tried my best to warm up. It was seriously fantastic to line up on the gate in a stadium of that size with the likes of Gordon Crocks, Jordan Rose and Colton Facciotti. The boys all blew me out of the gate and I tucked up the inside and was probably around fourth (you mean 24th – Dawg) over the first double.

It all went wrong from there as I took off sideways from the step-off. Thinking something was bent on the bike I took a couple of laps to try to work out

what was going on. Every time I took off everything went to the right, causing some out of control – and hopefully entertaining – rodeo moments.

The seven laps went pretty quickly and it was only when I got back and asked Arch and the crew to check to see if the swingarm was bent did we work out that the KX was going sideways because I wasn't putting any weight on my right ankle. Aha! All was fine with the bike, it was just the pilot with the problem.

It was to the LCQ for me as I had expected and with support coming from the Armadillo executive box (cheers gang) I rolled out onto the line once more. My start was shocking and it took me a couple of laps to try to find any kind of rhythm. I felt okay and with a dude on a KTM making a couple of mistakes I was able to close in on him.

As it turned out I only had to pass this dude to make the Main but to be completely honest all the urgency had been beaten out of me and I was just trying to ride smooth and hope that mistakes from others could take me through. After stalling twice in two corners my chance of keeping any pressure on the guy had gone and I had mixed emotions as I came to the flag. On one hand I really wanted to race harder than I did to make the final and on the other hand I was pretty relieved that I didn't have to keep riding in pain.

I would like to thank Steve, Alex and Paul @ Kawasaki UK – the bike was perfect but the pilot was not. Suttty and Sean, McCann, Lester Johnson, Vic at Motul, Arch, Big Kev, Scotty C, H and TJ, Rob and Philip 'Take That' Coulter @ No Fear, Martinez, P-Wood and P-Chops @ 661, Jason @ Vans, Louis @ Stickerman, Brother Fordy @ Surfinglife, the 'Armadillo' Massive, Rees and the gang at Renthal, Darren @ CTI, MJ, Woody and Barry P and finally the RUH A+E department as well as all the others who provided words of encouragement!

Brace yourself!

WALKER GETS MORPHED

Deputy Dawg had arranged to hook me up with Darren from Technology in Motion to fit me up with some sparkly new CTI Morph knee braces. The guys at DBR towers had grown sick of me moaning about my rickety old knees and Dawg had been allocated the task of shutting me up.

Darren turned up at Cardiff and within seconds I had my boots off and my race pants removed. Knee braces are a system of protection which are chosen by almost 100 per cent of all pro racers.

Knee braces provide a great level of support and help with confidence while riding and these new CTI Morphs are no exception to the rule. A pair of these units retail at under £600 and are easily fitted with a few measurements.

My legs were measured as a large (like your head – DD) and Darren went to work on selecting the correct pads to get that perfect 'snug' fit to each pivot point on my knees. I have been wearing a CTI Edge on my right knee and these Morphs instantly felt like they had been made for me. Within minutes both braces were fitted and I felt like I had been wearing them for a while.

They are slim when fitted and you still get a good feel for the bike while wearing them. I haven't got much in the way of ligaments left in my knees so this snug and comfortable fitment had me feeling good as I was able to go straight out on the track and forget I was wearing a brand new set of braces. Legendary. Cheers Darren.



Darren from CTI fits up Walker at Cardiff

Jorgensen just couldn't get on with the Rinaldi Yamaha



DANISH BLUES!

A factory ride is the dream of every motocross rider but, for Brian Jorgensen, his '05 place on the Rinaldi Yamaha squad signalled the start of a season of struggles...

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson



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A FACTORY contract must be the dream of every motocross rider but for Brian Jorgensen his 2005 season with Rinaldi Yamaha turned into a nightmare. As the Great Dane looks forward to a renewal of his winning ways on his return to Martin Honda, DBR caught up with the 30-year-old to find out exactly went wrong last summer.

"First of all I never really felt that good with the bike and I found it difficult to find a good set-up for the bike. I pretty much struggled all year – I didn't even feel good on the bike when I was winning in Namur or leading in Italy.

"It was a tough season and I even got to the stage where I was thinking 'if I don't ride better than this then perhaps it's time to stop and do something else in life'. I think I work as hard as anyone and when the results are not coming then it is not satisfying at all.

"I just didn't feel comfortable with the bike. I tried to set the bike up better for me but every time we were too far away from what I wanted to do on the bike. The team tried to make me a little bit happier with the suspension but there was still no comfortable feeling. It was the same problem we had right from the beginning of the season. I don't know what it was – the suspension, the frame, the engine – but it was just a totally different feeling from what I had on the Honda.

"It was frustrating to go in a factory team and not get the results. And in the end I was just plain slow – as soon as I got near to the limit I would crash and that leads to other things, like in Portugal when I got knocked out. It was difficult for me to come back after that because I've never been knocked out before in my life and I lost seven hours of memory. Seven hours of my life just disappeared and that's scary!

"Then I got knocked out again in England. I was having difficulty with concentration and that affected my confidence too, not knowing what was happening in my head. A broken bone or leg, you can come to terms with that and know that after a certain time it's going to be healed but with the head you never really know what is happening."

It is to Brian's credit that he does not try to play down the problems he had in the wake of repeat concussions but just one week after Matchams he was back on the gas, leading the Italian GP right up until the last lap when a sudden loss of engine power cost him the win.

The main reason the GP winner of 2004, the man who had ended Honda's three-year drought in the premier class, slumped to 13th in the world rankings is his incompatibility with the YZM450F!

"Already from the first time I rode the Yamaha I felt that we were too far away from what I wanted with the bike. It was my own mistake that we never found a solution. I was trying to be so positive about the year and kept telling myself it was me and that it would come together and get better – but it didn't. Even to my wife I was being really positive but deep down inside I knew I didn't feel good. And the worst thing you can do is to lose confidence in yourself.

"I was trying my hardest every weekend but I'm only a human being and you can only take so much. I think I showed in 2004 that I am not weak mentally when I got injured before the third round, had to have a month off and came back to win both motos at Teutschenthal – then crashed again in Holland and dislocated my shoulder but still pulled myself out of the big hole again. I got through all that but last year it got so bad I ended up in such a hole that I eventually went to a guy back home in Denmark to help me.

"The team tried to do their best with the bike – even if they didn't succeed – but from the

profile



*Last season was disappointing for the Dane
"It was frustrating to go in a factory team and not get the results"*



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start of the season I should have been tougher and put my foot down and say 'I can't ride this'. But being off for six months after my operation you don't feel you can tell them the bike is a piece of **** because you don't feel good on it. And Stefan was winning on the same bike!"

And therein lies the clue – Rinaldi make a bike for Stefan Everts!

"The engine had good power but it was more peaky than the Honda and that makes it more difficult to ride with my riding style. You can be on the powerband and there is nothing, then suddenly it is too aggressive for me to even control. I am so aggressive in the corners while Stefan just rolls on the throttle. He hits the powerband he needs when he comes out of the corner – I believe he is the only guy out there with really good corner speed, he is turning the throttle so smoothly.

"The bike was perfect for Stefan but there are 39 other guys at the gate and we all ride differently to him. They needed to do something different for me to what Stefan needs and they just never did it.

"The team works very hard for Stefan and he wins the world title. But for me, coming into a factory team, I felt and expected that we should have also been able to make a bike for me which was adapted to my style. I should not have been expected to adapt to the bike. I blame myself for not being tough enough to say 'this is not going to work for me, we need to do something else'. I guess we'll never know what would have been if they would have changed it.

"I don't even know if it would be possible because there does seem to be a lot of difference between four-valving and five-valving – the character of a four-valve bike like the Honda is more bottom, you can do more torque. The Yamaha has a good peak but not so much torque, not so much power in the bottom. I'm not saying it is bad but for my

riding style the Honda suits me better.

"I never had one single training where I felt comfortable with the bike so I know I can look back and say that this bike was not for me. It is such a shame because everything else was perfect. I was living in Italy five kilometres from the team so I was even practising on a factory bike, I love the area and the people in the team but it just didn't work out on the track.

"We went through the same discussion all year because every time I complained they would say 'you were leading by 20 seconds in Namur' but that was no measure of what was happening.

"I never liked the track there. I was 18th in quali and in the morning I was 12 seconds off the pace but in the race I was doing exactly what I had to do, crossing all of the bumps and the ruts. The speed is not high there so it didn't show up the problems I was having with the bike. I just rode my own race and I pulled it off. When I came back in after the race the team said 'that was great' but I didn't feel good out there at all. I had won but I knew I had ridden so bad.

"I rode around for 60 laps in practice and was pushing really hard and never got anywhere near the lap times I was doing in the race. In the race I was just cruising, just trying to get the fun out of jumping from one smooth patch to the next and trying to take out the fear of hitting the trees. There's more to it than just being fast at Namur. I got the start, I didn't have to think about anybody else and was playing with the bike."

Brian's relationship with team-mate Everts did not blossom through 2005.

"We didn't have much of a relationship – we would say hello but no more. I don't get stressed about that, I just try to do my job and I'm sure he does the same. But then at Nismes he started complaining that I was holding him

up. He complained about the first two laps and there were 18 still to go. If I'd held him up for 21 laps then I can understand it but for two laps that is bull****.

"After the race the team told me I had to let him by and that gets at you. You start riding with a different attitude, you don't want to get involved in conflicts with the team so when he was behind me at Loket I wanted a five-second gap so no-one could complain. I tried to ride so hard and used up so much energy that in the end I started to lose concentration and was thinking about whether I should let him past or not.

"If Stefan thinks I was holding him up, I'm not really bothered. That's his problem. I believe if you're nine times world champion then you should be able to pass no matter what!"

But now Brian is looking ahead to Martin Honda where he enjoyed his greatest successes through the 2003/04 seasons.

"I was talking again with Paolo Martin before the season ended. I even tested the Honda again before Ireland – 10 minutes back on a Honda and I was back to my normal self so that already proved to me that I can still ride a bike well.

"I used such a lot of energy riding the Yamaha but I felt immediately so good again on the Honda. I was riding spec from Pichon and maybe we are a little bit down on power but I was loving every minute of it because I could put the power to the ground again.

"Some people were saying 'he's done and can't even ride good on the factory bike' and I want to prove them wrong. I need to return to a team where I am the first rider, a team where they can make the bike to my satisfaction.

"I believe that it is a lot about winning that the team works for the rider. That's what Yamaha do for Stefan and it's worked out pretty successfully for them!"



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Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

FRENCH CONNECTION

For 40 years France, despite its thriving domestic scene, had never been a serious contender for MXdN honours – but that all changed in 1988 at Villars sous Escot...

FOR ALMOST four decades France had played a major role in the development of world motocross. Their numerous well-paid international meetings were manna from heaven for riders across the globe. If your name and face fitted, you could earn substantial appearance money as well as the prospect of a proper prize fund.

British stars would pile into their trucks after a national championship round and motor through the night to pick up a wad of French francs at Gallefontaine or St Quentin or Castlenau de Levis.

These legendary race circuits were also competing for the privilege of running a French MX GP. Yet not until the late '80s did French

riders emerge as a viable world force. The busiest, most lucrative nation in the sport never even boasted a grand prix winner – let alone a world champion – until 1979 when Jean-Jacques Bruno slung his KTM to victory in the West German GP at Beuerne.

That ride earned 'JJ' a factory Suzuki berth for the next five years. But despite becoming the darling of huge French MX crowds his career never really took off as expected, although he won twice more – in Czecho in 1981 and Finland in 1982.

Then along came a kid called Jacky Vimond. Much favoured by Yamaha France and JT Racing, 'Maximum' Vimond overcame injury and serious illness to claim a famous first for

France – the 1986 world 250cc crown.

Equally significantly, the inaugural Paris Bercy Supercross of 1984 ignited a French passion for all things American on home soil. Within three years an alliance of riders, the FFM and racer turned track builder and entrepreneur Jean-Luc Fouchet had launched a French national supercross championship – the first such European series – in 1987.

Suddenly, young prospects were popping out of the provinces. And the first champion was to become the greatest motorcycle racer of all time. A skinny youth from the Manosque, in the deep south, Jean-Michel Bayle won the 1988 world 125 crown. And, coincidentally, the Motocross des Nations was due back on



Duel of the day as Ward and Bayle dispute 125cc honours in the first moto

French soil for only the fifth time in the event's illustrious history.

Vimond that year campaigned the exquisite aluminium-framed YZM factory Yamaha which finished fifth in the 500cc title chase. France now had two-thirds of a potentially explosive team but lacked a substantial third member.

Short, stocky Yannig Kervella ended the season 10th in the world 250 series. An urbane, eloquent and unlikely MXer, Yannig had overcome considerable hostility in French racing circles due to his dad Herve being President of the FFM. But he was the only possible third man.

France had mounted the rostrum in third place on just three occasions in the first 40

years of the MX des. The last time was Holland in 1969, which even in 1988 was a hell of a long time ago. And they would face a shuddering American trio of Ron Lechien and Jeff Ward on 500 and 125 Kawasakis and ultimate folk hero Ricky Johnson on a 250 Honda seeking an eighth successive US win.

The circuit at Villars sous Escot – a tiny village deep in eastern France – nestled in the beautiful verdant foothills of the Alps, a few miles from the Swiss border. There, the Moto Club de Montbeliard ran a truly magnificent track which wound along a steep-sided valley, heavily wooded on one side. 'A team capable of victory,' piped programme notes actually penned by Kervella's old man. 'Two World

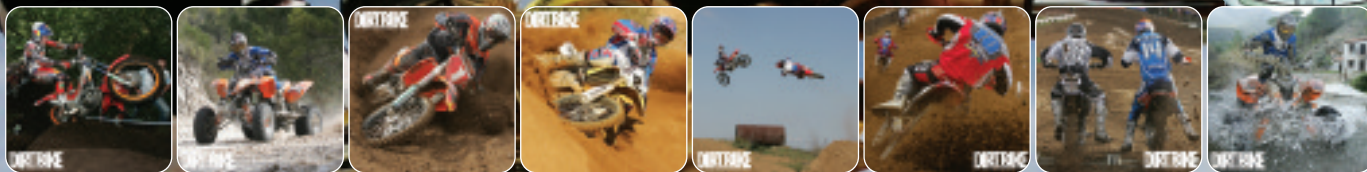
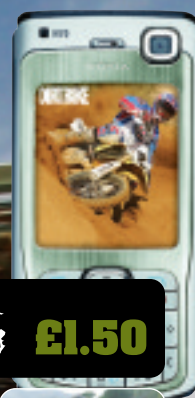
champions and a joker!' He had a sense of humour, then, did Herve! Worth recalling, though, that his son moved on to a cool career as a coach, ultimately motivating perennial playboy Frederic Bolley to achieve world 250cc acclaim in 1999 and 2000. The guy certainly knew what he was doing!

Almost 50,000 fans packed that valley on the splendid afternoon of September 11. The atmosphere crackled with anticipation, although several major European countries were already in trouble. Belgium had lost Eric Geboers and Georges Jobe. Only teenager Rob Herring (250 Yamaha) remained from the original British squad and Kurt Nicoll hurt himself during practice. Italy were minus Michele Fanton

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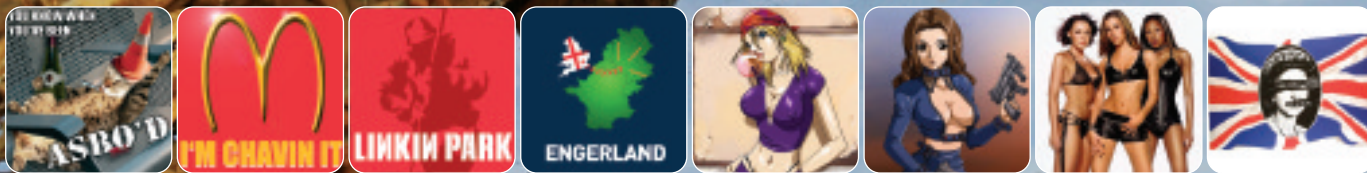
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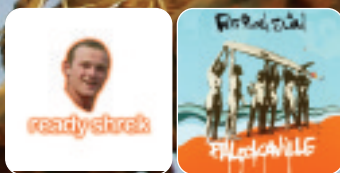
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Ron Lechien wins race three for his own personal clean sweep

burnicle's beat



Ricky 'Too Hip' Johnson launches into the valley cheered on by French as well as American fans

and Sandro Puzar. And Sweden's 34-year-old legend Hakan Carlqvist was making his farewell appearance in a country that had adopted him as its own!

Even during Saturday practice a series of needle matches erupted out on track. Holland's new 250 world champ John van den Berk hooked up on Lechien. Johnson shaded and passed Bayle's 125, which later enthralled an already enormous crowd in a fantastic handlebar-bashing duel with Jeff Ward. "J-M BEEEE, J-M BEEEE!" shrieked the course commentator.

Two rows of 23 starters lined up on Sunday. Lechien hit the front right away. 'Stay Loose' ordered his pitboard and the rangy Californian, who never left any turn unstoned, did just that!

Behind him Bayle, 17th on lap one, attacked Ward. Their epic duel had the valley in uproar. Up ahead Vimond passed Carla's Kawasaki for third place and set off after Aussie whippersnapper Jeff 'Croc' Leisk's 500 Honda.

'JMB' eventually left Wardy languishing in sixth place and, ultimately, second 125. This was when the classes scored separately so the 125 verdict was vital (can we have this arrangement back, please?)...

Excitement exploded into the tree tops as Vimond caught Leisk. The whole valley chanted deafeningly. "JAC-KEE, JAC-KEE, JAC-KEE!" For one glorious lap, Vimond snatched second place and the French team were tied for the lead with the USA on three points apiece. Then he fell, remounted fifth and the moment was gone.

The crowd reverted its eager attention to

Bayle, who took Carla, collided with Leisk then, on the final lap – as the valley shook – swept his 125cc Honda past Jeff's 500 amid an unbelievable crescendo of noise to claim second, just seven seconds behind Lechien!

France were still well placed on five points to America's three with Sweden a strong third

and waved a leg across the tabletop. The fans loved it and America's 1-2-1-1 scoreline meant they had an already impregnable advantage.

A catastrophic third race start, triggered by a faulty gate, sucked Carlqvist into the bales and broke a photographer's leg (we lived dangerously in pursuit of the perfect pic, y'know!). A statutory 30-minute delay built up tension further, although Carla was hardly in the best frame of mind for a rerun. Once off, Leisk and Lechien powered their 500s to the front while Johnson, from the second row, was buried outside the top 20. 'Too Hip' commenced one of his majestic, powerful charges as Leisk held off Lechien until half-distance and wild teenager Herring, on his last ride with Yamaha, closed on them both!

Rob finally followed Lechien past Leisk, as did Johnson, while frantic midfield action saw Vimond emerge fifth ahead of 'Beppe' Andreani, Pekka Vehkonen, Carlqvist and Kervella.

Those two top 10 places ensured a sensational second overall for the home team with Sweden still a fabulous third until the cruel closing

stages when Peter Johansson's 250 Yamaha broke a gearbox and ground to a halt to deny Carla a final, fulminating visit to a French rostrum. Finland stepped forward instead for their first-ever MX des podium!

The vast, sporting crowd gathered to pay generous homage to the Finns, their American idols and their own homespun heroes. French motocross had, in the space of a decade, truly come of age. And their 'pilotes' were destined to become a major force on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.



Vimond, Kervella and Bayle celebrate on the podium

ahead of Holland and Australia.

Ricky Johnson stormed into the lead in race two applauded almost as loudly as any Frenchman but Bayle crashed heavily and, thrown to the side of the track, couldn't retrieve his Honda until the field had flown by. Dead last, he coolly stopped for fresh goggles before ripping bravely back to 15th place and fourth 125. With Kervella struggling unsuccessfully to stave off Jeff Ward on the leading 125, French resistance was crumbling.

Johnson no-handed the steepest descent



A catalogue of crashes and the occasional mechanical problem left Antti Pyrhonen at the wrong end of the MX1 top 15 in 2005 – but TM's factory Finn knows he's got the potential to get into the single digits in '06

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson

ANYONE KNOW how many genuine factory riders there are in the motocross GPs? All of the Japanese factories do their deals through agents like Michele Rinaldi, Sylvain Geboers and Jan De Groot and even Husqvarna rely on Edo Racing to run their GP operation which leaves us with the KTM crews and... Antti Pyrhonen at TM!

"Most people still don't realise that we are a pure factory team," admits the 27-year-old Finn. "Of course the team spends a lot of time during the season in Belgium – everybody does because of the training opportunities – but the workshop is in Italy. It is just that Patrick Heydens, the guy who runs the team, is Belgian that makes people think we are a private team."

"The factory is 50 per cent karting engines, the other 50 per cent is off-road bikes, motocross, enduro and supermoto. They are in the same building and for sure they do some work together but as a rider you are not aware of it – the racing project is to make good

marketing for the bike and to develop it.

"The TM two-strokes were very good in the '90s when Puzar finished second in the world and now we are developing the four-stroke – we have already shown at the GPs that the bike is very competitive."

It was the middle of 2004 when the chirpy character from Hyvinkaa joined the Italian concern and his debut was sensational. "I got fifth in Sweden. You know, there is Everts, then Townley, Coppins and Pichon but then from fifth to 15th there is nothing in it. On a day when everything clicks you can finish fifth and another day you can be 15th. That day at Uddevalla I was coming back from a broken scaphoid and I still had a cast on my hand but the start was great and I just flowed and was able to show what I could do."

Mid-year signings are unusual but the Pyrhonen/TM link was not one grabbed desperately out of thin air. "I had already been talking with the factory in the autumn of 2003

and I was really keen to switch to the factory team but TM could not commit themselves definitely to a full GP season in 2004."

Antti had ridden the last three seasons for the Dutch Care Innovation team with ever-growing success – including the Dutch national title – and was all set to ride for them again when a bombshell exploded and the operation was closed a week before Christmas.

Antti, clutching at straws, grabbed a lifeline thrown out by the German Kurz team. "I needed bikes right away to start training and they could offer me them. But it was the wrong team for me. We started off on the wrong foot because I had to go there but there were no other possibilities so late in the year."

"We didn't have the same ideas. At Care and now at TM we can talk together but within three months I knew that it wasn't going to work at Kurz. I was either going to destroy my career or move. Then I had the injury. I was on the point of leaving anyway and I decided there and



Antti leads Stefan Everts,
Josh Coppins and Pascal Leuret

then that I had to find another ride.

"At the last minute TM had decided that they were ready to enter the GPs that year after all and I had watched the development when Oddenino was riding with interest. I kept talking with Patrick and the factory knew what I could do because I had won an Italian championship race on the Suzuki in February that year. So when I was hurt I asked if they had anything for me and they said yes immediately.

"I kept consistent results to the end of the '04 season and I went into 2005 with a strong mental desire to do even better. But I crashed a lot of races when I was top 10 because I was trying too hard to move up to fifth or sixth. I could have had many more points but I was pushing my limits – taking too many risks. We had so many silly little problems too. We use a Nissin brake – the same as Honda use – and it broke. In another race someone ran into me and the clutch basket was damaged. **** happens and we had a lot of it."

In a refreshing manner seldom encountered nowadays, both Antti and TM both showed their faith in each other at an early stage. "We talked about the 2006 contract already last spring – both sides wanted to carry on our relationship and we signed already before SA.

"I was always top 10 in qualification and in SA I took the holeshot. But then I crashed and hit my head hard. From there on I had difficulty to concentrate for the full 40 minutes – I went to Nismes with no training for two weeks and I crashed and hit my head again, I had to miss Czecho and it was better for both of us to finish out the season at a reduced pace."

So what does 2006 hold in store? "Perhaps my championship placing doesn't show it – I was 15th – but I know that I have ridden faster last summer than ever before. In Sweden, at Matchams and Teutschenthal I was battling with the lead group and I could never do that before.

"TM are confident in me, they know I have a big heart and they know that I am confident in them. The problems we had in 2005 have not diminished my confidence in either the bike or the factory. They have faith in me, I have faith in them. It's a mutual thing and we have a clear road ahead of us.

"I need to bring out my full potential this summer and that means I want to be top 10 at every race. The main goal is to bring out the potential and bring it to the finish flag!"





Representing Finland at last year's MXdN in France

Euro star

ANTTI'S Y2K CONQUEST

"I was 125 European champion in 2000. I had won everything there was to win in Finland but I had never even been outside the country before I did that series. I got quite a lot of recognition back home for winning the European title straight away but there was nothing anywhere else because everyone within the motocross world knows that the level between the European series and the GPs is huge. Someone finishing 35th in the world championship would normally kick the European champ's ass!

"But 2000 was a strong year. Kevin Strijbos was second and everyone knew who he was even then. Kornel Nemeth was third and fourth was Joaquim Rodrigues. Dobes, Philippaerts, Leansoo, Salaets, they were all there too that year."

So what happened to Matti Klemets and Timo Aaltonen – two more Finns who cracked the top 10? "It is such hard work to come to the GPs from Finland. They stayed in Finland and kept riding MX as a hobby. But I won it and wanted to make a professional career,

"It's hard to come to the GPs from Finland. The finance and support is pretty small and even when you have made your way through to the GPs you are away from home all year. Everyone talks about the South Africans and the New Zealanders coming over here but we Finns are exactly the same. Maybe we have many thousand kilometres less but we can't afford to go home either.

"And it's not just the lack of finance which makes it a rough road. We have only five months a year when there is no snow and we can ride – everyone else gets to ride about 10 months a year when they are only 10 years old. But we use those dark winter months to build our fitness and be ready for the short summer. I'm not complaining, perhaps it gives us something else on the attitude side.

"I also rode two GPs in 2000 and scored points straight away so I got my first professional deal. When I won the European title I was a pure privateer with some support from the Finnish Husqvarna importer but

the title gave me a permanent place in qualification from Dorna and I made a deal with Care Innovation. I was there for three years, two years with Honda and then one year with Yamaha.

"When I first came to the GPs I was a sand rider. I got a sixth at Genk but I needed to learn many things on hard tracks. In 2002 the 125 Honda was just not competitive so I switched after two GPs to the 490 and needed to learn everything all over again. By the end of the year I was sixth in Russia and 2003 was another advance.

"Maybe everyone doesn't have so much respect for eighth in 650 but back then the class was so much more competitive than MX3 now. Then it was still a real world championship.

"My first full year I was 24th, then 16th in 2002 and 2003 I was eighth. So I always took eight places out and 2004 was looking good if I could have kept that up until Care closed their operation and I was left with nothing for a time."

fwsx

*Colton Facciotti takes the
Open Pro win with a great
come-from-behind ride*

SIZE MATTERS!

**The track's huge, the crowd's
not - but the Pro Open
class action's massive as
Future West return to
Cardiff's Millennium Stadium**

Words and photos by Sully





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A puncture drops
Jeff Alessi to third in
the Pro 125cc division

results

125 PRO

- | | | |
|---|------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | Mike Alessi | (Red Bull KTM) |
| 2 | Colton Facciotti | (Molson Kawasaki) |
| 3 | Jeff Alessi | (Red Bull KTM) |
| 4 | Kyle Beaton | (Bike-it Dixon Yamaha) |
| 5 | Neville Bradshaw | (Motovision Suzuki) |
| 6 | Jim Murro | (KTM) |

OPEN PRO

- | | | |
|---|------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | Colton Facciotti | (Molson Kawasaki) |
| 2 | Neville Bradshaw | (Motovision Suzuki) |
| 3 | Scott Columb | (Hooper Suzuki) |
| 4 | Gordon Crockard | (Bike-it Dixon Yamaha) |
| 5 | Ryan Voase | (LPE Team Green Kawasaki) |
| 6 | Martin Barr | (Bike-it Dixon Yamaha) |

THE CARDIFF crowd might well be smaller than ever before but the Future West crew have managed to attract a bumper entry and shoehorn the biggest supercross track seen in Britain for almost 20 years into the Millennium Stadium!

Around 200 truckloads of dirt are shipped into the arena and MX-Tracktech's Paul O'Gorman sculpts out a technical but safe circuit that's chockful of doubles, triples, rhythm sections and those killer whoops that are many a Brit SXer's downfall.

The 125 class Main Event's a bit of a yawner as Mike Alessi does his usual thing of yanking the holey then checking out. Lil brother Jeff fights through to second before collecting a rear wheel puncture and slipping back to third behind Canada's Colton Facciotti but ahead of Bike-It Dixon Yamaha guest rider Kyle Beaton. But the 15-lap Open class final is a very different story indeed...

Beaton and Facciotti are back out for this one but they'll have their hands full if they're gonna beat off the other top contenders. When the gate drops and the 20-strong pack head into turn one it's UKXC champ Ryan Voase who looks like he's nailed the holeshot on his LPE Kawasaki – but he hasn't quite got it in the bag. "I thought I was in the lead but just at the last minute Kyle Beaton dived up the inside and took me clean off the track," reckons Ryan. "By the time I got going I was more or less last."

But Ryan's not the only Kawasaki contender who's got his work cut out as Facciotti gets no further than turn two before getting snarled up in some dirt bike carnage of his own.

Breaking clear of the commotion is Bike-it Dixon Yamaha star Martin Barr who's holding down the lead ahead of Kiwi Scotty Columb, Beaton, Glen Phillips and Neville Bradshaw as

the riders settle down into a rhythm in the early laps.

But on lap four it all goes off. Columb makes a move on Barr to steal the lead and Beaton pans himself which allows Bradshaw to get on the tail end of Barr and make it a three-man battle for the lead.

Columb pushes hard and manages to pull out a small gap on the chasing pair but the Kiwi seems to be getting a little over excited and his timing goes to pot which allows both the Ulsterman and the South African to catch up again and apply some serious pressure.

A mixture of increased pressure from behind and an ever roughening track finally get to be too much for Columb as the imported Hooper Suzuki star chucks his bike down the track! Barr gobbles up the lead and Bradshaw gets by too even though Columb's up and going again in what must be some sort of record time.

With just Barr between himself and the lead Bradshaw can almost taste victory but tonight's not gonna be Nev's night. Even though the Nevster blows by Barr for the lead he doesn't hold it for long as Facciotti blazes past and disappears into the distance.

It's an awesome ride from the young Canadian who after starting last and surviving a mid-race collision with Glen Phillips – which unfortunately causes the Welshman to DNF with an injured arm – picks off the leading pack one by one much like the Washington sniper popped off pedestrians.

With the Canuck taking a fine win and Bradshaw finishing second Columb keeps it a truly cosmopolitan podium by filling out the third and final step. Gordon Crockard and Voase battle it out for fourth with the nod going to the Ulsterman while Barr slips back to fifth after coming off just a few laps from home.

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Neville Bradshaw leads the Pro Open Main Event but can't stay ahead of Facciotti



Hello Daaaave!

ACU AT FW! WTF?

It's nice to see the vice chairman of the ACU's motocross committee Dave Williams enjoying some Future West hospitality – and supercross action – down in Cardiff. It's especially 'nice' when you consider that the organisation Mr Williams represents – yep, the Auto Cycle Union – recently tried to scupper Future West's plans of organising this event in the Millennium Stadium.

A letter penned by Jim Parker – the chairman of the ACU – advised the stadium's management team that 'all motorcycle competitive events within the United Kingdom are required to comply to the regulations of the Auto Cycle Union'.

It continued to say that 'without such approval and/or licensing by the ACU you run a very serious risk of exposure to liability if there is an accident of any kind during the course of such event and we must make it clear that unless you desist from hosting such an event then any liability which may fall upon you as a result of you permitting your venue to be used for the event will be solely your responsibility'.

Oopsie! Seems that the ACU might be telling porkies there and it sure would be interesting to see what the AMCA, YMSA, BSMA and ORPA organisations would have to say about the ACU's claims.

Luckily, Lester Johnson and the Future West promotion team could prove to the stadium that everything was indeed kosher and the event went ahead without major incident.

We're guessing that the ACU's letter had nothing to do with the fact that a round of their own sanctioned series was supposed to be going head-to-head with the Cardiff race and they were purely showing concern with the overall good of the sport in mind.



Glen Phillips pulls out injured after a collision with Facciotti in the Main



Kyle Beaton just misses the Pro 125cc podium

Podium prancer!

TALKIN' TRASH WITH SCOTTY COLUMB

Words by Geoff Walker

It's been a couple of years since Scotty Columb first arrived for a racing holiday in the UK. Back then he raced for the ARW Suzuki team then returned again in the summer of '05 to race for Rob Hooper's squad in the British MX2 and four-stroke championships. The former World Luge Champion from Queenstown, New Zealand, goes about his business in a quiet, unassuming way but he's becoming faster and faster each time he visits. We caught up with Scotty for a quick chat at the Cardiff Supercross to see what's been going on – on both sides of the world – for the man.

DBR: Hey Scotty - how's Australia?

SC: "Shut it!"

DBR: Okay... So what have you been up to since the summer?

SC: "When I went back I raced the NZ MX champs. I finished second to Cody Cooper who rides for Honda NZ and Australia. My speed is getting better all the time and I was closer to Coops this year than I have been before."

DBR: So if Cooper had injured himself before the des Nations you'd have been next in line for a shot at the Yanks?

SC: "Yeah, I guess... That would have been killer!"

DBR: What other races have you done – any races in Oz?

SC: "Yup! The Oceania race is a big New Zealand versus Australia match where we have MX motos and short sprint races. I rode my *****'n' nuts off there and finished second to Brett Metcalfe – it rocked."

DBR: So what brought you back?

SC: "I had the call from Hoops to come over to do the supercross championship. I said yeah and then it all got cancelled as I was at 30,000 feet! I was gutted but I managed to get an entry into this race [Cardiff] and then I was pretty stoked."

"Tonight has been bloody great! I got to lead the Main until I crashed. I'm a bit bummed by the crash but I still finished on the podium. I wanted that win real bad but it just didn't happen."

DBR: And you got to race with me...

SC: "Yeah but you're ****!"

[Uncomfortable silence]

DBR: What's been the highlight of the trip?

SC: "The podium tonight and kickin' Hoop's ass at ping pong! I laid it down and took the championship. He sucks at ping pong!"

DBR: What are your plans for the future?

SC: "My immediate plan is to get home and chill for a couple of days then it's off up to Josh's to train with him and TC. I really want to race in Europe and the UK in 2006 so I need to try to get sorted and get over here for a real go at the British and world championships."

Scotty Columb refuels





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DIRTBIKE RIDER
JANUARY 2006

YEAR IN THE DIRT

Month	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
2	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
3	25	26	27	28	29	30	31					

CALENDAR

Month	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
2	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
3	25	26	27	28	29	30	31					



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DIRTBIKE RIDER
FEBRUARY 2006

YEAR IN THE DIRT

Month	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
2	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
3	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31		

CALENDAR

Month	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
2	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
3	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31		

DIRTBIKE RIDER
MAY 2006

YEAR IN THE DIRT

Month	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
3	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24

CALENDAR

Month	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
3	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24

DIRTBIKE RIDER
MAY 2006

YEAR IN THE DIRT

Month	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
3	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24

CALENDAR

Month	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
3	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24

DIRTBIKE RIDER
JULY 2006

YEAR IN THE DIRT

Month	July	August	September	October	November	December
1	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	7	8	9	10	11	12
3	13	14	15	16	17	18

CALENDAR

Month	July	August	September	October	November	December
1	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	7	8	9	10	11	12
3	13	14	15	16	17	18

DIRTBIKE RIDER
AUGUST 2006

YEAR IN THE DIRT

Month	August	September	October	November	December
1	1	2	3	4	5
2	6	7	8	9	10
3	11	12	13	14	15

CALENDAR

Month	August	September	October	November	December
1	1	2	3	4	5
2	6	7	8	9	10
3	11	12	13	14	15

DIRTBIKE RIDER
SEPTEMBER 2006

YEAR IN THE DIRT

Month	September	October	November	December
1	1	2	3	4
2	5	6	7	8
3	9	10	11	12

CALENDAR

Month	September	October	November	December
1	1	2	3	4
2	5	6	7	8
3	9	10	11	12

DIRTBIKE RIDER
OCTOBER 2006

YEAR IN THE DIRT

Month	October	November	December
1	1	2	3
2	4	5	6
3	7	8	9

CALENDAR

Month	October	November	December
1	1	2	3
2	4	5	6
3	7	8	9

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MAGIC MEMORIES FOR
BRYAN MACKENZIE

CHAMPS CHAT

WORLD CHAMPION
STEVEN CLARKE

WORLD BEATERS!

CARDIFF KIDS TAKE CENTRE STAGE

It was billed as the World Youth Supercross Championship but that seemed to fizzle out in the build-up to the event. Whatever it was called it turned out to be an exciting event which all the nippers who took part in really enjoyed.

I made three trips to Cardiff prior to the race on Saturday. The first on Wednesday was to check out the track design which was good – technically demanding and with no horrendously huge jumps. It was a track for good racing which kept the riders thinking and the crowd happy.

I returned on Friday for the Alessi brothers' training day and again everyone was in high spirits and even riders who were not competing in the racing booked lessons with the two American superstars – that was nice to see.

Then it was back on Saturday morning to catch practice and qualifying and with some 300 riders to get through it was crazy fun – motocross dads are mental!

With in the region of 10,000 spectators looking on the night was set for excitement with hopefully not too many crashes. First final of the night was the Auto class. Kids at this age should be enjoying taking part in such a huge event but some didn't quite see it that way – that's another story.

After four very exciting laps Ben Watson crossed the line first to big cheers and a huge puff of smoke from the pyrotechnic display. Ben rode effortlessly and deserved the win. In second was main man Max Acres who chased

Ben all the way while squeezing home in third was Scooter Webster on his super quick Cobra.

Then it was the turn of the geared machines and the ultra-competitive 65cc class. Logan Karnow from the USA made the trip across the pond and what a trip it was as he stormed to a wonderful win. Logan took control by doing some of the bigger jumps and handling the technical sections a lot better than the rest which secured him the win.

James Dunne is definitely getting quicker at supercross and proved this by grabbing second. James did try some of the bigger jumps and that shows that us Brits can do what the American kids can. Battling away in third was Luke Norris who was real happy to finish on the final step of the podium.

There can only be one winner in the SW85 class (dude, that's the same in every class – Sutt) and that was Max Anstie. Max is still pretty much unbeatable in supercross in this country!

It was good to see Alfie Smith back and the little guy has grown a bit and is now looking more comfortable on the 85cc bike. Alfie took second and was smiling from ear to ear on the podium. Manchester's Jake Page was third but had to work hard to pass Christy Harnett and Christian Taylor for the position.

With so many riders accidents were bound to happen and unfortunately they did for both Christian Craig and Scot James who were injured before the Main Event. Christian injured himself quite badly so he didn't take part in the final but Scot struggled on and was in tears of

pain come the chequered flag – brave lad.

Will Worden has found a new lease of life this season and boy did he ride well, blitzing the BW85 final and taking the supercross world championship! Lewis Abbott onboard his new MXW Honda couldn't quite catch Will but did hold him off for a couple of laps at the beginning before finally finishing second just ahead of the battered and bruised Welsh flyer Scot James.

What should have been the best race of the night ended up a good race but it could have been so much better. Why? Well the Ashley Greedy and Steven Clarke battle should have been a bar banging affair but poor Ashley broke his wrist riding for the TV cameras on Thursday so the big battle of Cardiff was a non-starter – a real shame!

But surprises were in store for the Millennium crowd and after going down on the first corner Steven Clarke could only manage second to French ace Axel Alletrv (I've never heard of him either – RC). The Yamaha rider rode smooth and took full advantage of Steven's mistake and went on to win.

Steven was gutted but that's racing and his time will come again, that's for sure. Chris Bastick looked good all night and secured third – even though he was maybe a little bit erratic at times.

Talking to the lads afterwards most said the track was good, very technical but safe and fun to ride and that's what it's all about – having some fun and if you win all the better!



Max Anstie's a class act in the SW85cc division



Christy Harnett misses out on the SW85 podium

Chris Bastick – erratic but pretty fast!



Joe Jefferies winds up his little Katoom



Will Worden blitzes the BW85cc Main Event



Lewis Abbott sets the early pace in the BW85cc Main Event



Steven Clarke wins the Clubman Main Event but messes up his start in the 125cc final



CHAMPSCHAT

THIS MONTH...STEVEN CLARKE

What better way to see in the New Year than by having our current and only motocross world champion Steven Clarke tell you what he's been up to recently in Champs Chat – over to you Curly!

"Thanks Tubby! I've been training real hard at MTF since the end of the UK outdoor season – especially in the gym building strength and stamina for my move to the bigger bike in 2006.

"I recently raced at the Mini Os in Gainesville, Florida, where I entered three different classes which was tough going but a lot of fun (full Mini O report in next month's DBR). I had some good results which I was pleased with.

"Straight after the event I had to hop on yet another plane and head for Monaco for the FIM world championship presentation with Stefan Everts and all the other motocross, enduro and supermoto champions – it was amazing.

"It's something I will remember for the rest of my life for sure. If that wasn't crazy enough I hopped on another plane to Cardiff for the supercross. I managed to land at 2.30pm and just got back in time to race the clubman class which I won with no practice but the youth 125 race was a bit disappointing. I crashed on the start and ended up way down the field but I pushed real hard although I couldn't quite catch the French kid who won – fair play to him.

"Next season will see me racing in the BYMX in the Premier class, British Under 21 championship and selected Maxxis rounds so it looks like a real busy year. I've now signed for the new KRM Honda team which is awesome and can't wait to get the season going. I should be back from training in America just in time for the first round of the BYMX – see you all then."



GUNNING FOR GLORY, MX2 2007 >>

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COMMENT

AS I'M sitting here writing my column I'm also thinking about my whole month away in January. I still haven't decided where I'm going but Cambodia looks good – stress free and dead cheap.

"A month away," I can hear you all say! I need a break as 11 months on the road week-in, week-out kills the body and the mind – so hopefully after living in the jungle for four weeks I will be fresh and revitalised for the new season. And I might even lose some weight too!

Bang goes another supercross series as not only did we lose the official ACU championship but now the final Future West round has gone down the swanny too. Cardiff is a great venue but unless we hold a world round then we'll never fill it – like my old mucker Suttly says 'you could give away the tickets but you'd still never fill the stadium'.

Our little sport needs re-marketing and repackaging into arenacross, not supercross. Concentrate on filling the small venues with 8,000 screaming fans, get rid of the air horns, a good laser display always goes down well. Top it off with freestyle and the paying public will go away well pleased and just maybe the political in-fighting which is now happening will stop – it isn't doing anyone any favours.

I hope 2006 will be good for everyone – Rage hopefully will expand, DBR will get even better and just maybe we can move our sport forward from last year and make the general public aware that it's not all about mud, noise and broken bones!

Until next time ride safe...

Chuss

Got any youth news for Rage?
Give Ray Chuss a bell on 07773 609994 or email him at dbryoutheditor@raychuss.com

TAYLOR VERNON



AGE: 9
BIKE: PMC, MOTOXMANIX KTM
YEARS RACING: 3
KIT: FOX, OF3 AND THOR
NUMBER OF TROPHIES: 83
TITLES: 2
BROKEN BONES: NONE FOR ME!
TRUCK/VAN: MERCEDES SPRINTER



Bry Mac takes home the silverware

BACKINTHEDAY

Team Twisted Seven Kawasaki team member Bryan MacKenzie is this month's Pro rider who takes us back in the day with another favourite memory.

"When I was 10 I won the British championship in the 60cc class – to win something like that when you're that young was really cool. My season was going great in the ACU (now BYMX) championship, in fact I never lost a race. I never used to ride or train during the week but every single day I used to meet up with my buddies to go ride BMX.

"But as kids do I tried to do something crazy and crashed on a huge tabletop on my BMX and broke my wrist and elbow.

"I spent a whole week in hospital and I thought the season was finished – I ended up missing both the BSMA and ACU finals but, thankfully, my cast came off three days before the final round of the ACU championship at Desertmartin. My dad didn't want to go but I was adamant I wanted the championship.

"I lost my first three races of the year but won the final moto and came away with the championship – it was a great memory for so many different reasons."

MAX ACRES



AGE: 9
BIKE: KTM
YEARS RACING: 2
KIT: ALLOY AND TROY LEE DESIGNS
NUMBER OF TROPHIES: 28
TITLES: 1
BROKEN BONES: 2
TRUCK/VAN: MERCEDES RIMOR

MYBESTTRACE

The New Year starts with ACU Academy rider David Games telling us all about his best race.

"My best race was at the BSMA national at Brookthorpe in Gloucestershire. I was taking part in the All British championship and I'd had my arm taken out of plaster only two weeks before so it felt a bit sore.

"There were loads of fast riders there that day and I was feeling quite nervous. I was lacking in a bit of fitness so it was going to be difficult but I picked a comfortable position on the startgate and made a great start and took the holeshot.

"Kirk Richards came past halfway through the first lap but to my surprise I stayed with him with only a small gap between us.

"I remember getting tired near the end and Jack Taylor started breathing down my neck – I was so determined not to let him pass and I managed to hold him off right to the chequered flag.

"But what was so great is that I stayed with Kirk and that made my day and gave me a huge confidence boost."

Brookthorpe heroics for David Games



RAY'SRIBTICKLER!

On my recent trip to the USA I spotted some very odd things along the way. So armed with my trusty Canon I made sure you guys get to see them first. Take a look at this double-decker mountain bike, if you keep looking at it your eyes go funny – weird!





back passage

MIKE LAROCO WILL TURN 35 ON FEBRUARY 12 BUT HE'S STILL PLAYING WITH THE KIDS. FOR PERSPECTIVE, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT JAMES STEWART WASN'T EVEN TWO WHEN MIKE MADE HIS AMA SX DEBUT IN 1987.

BUT THEY DON'T CALL HIM THE ROCK FOR NOTHING. HE'S SOLID AND, ACCORDING TO HIM, ON HIS NEW FOUR-STROKE MOUNT HE'S EVEN MORE CONSISTENTLY FAST THAN HE WAS ON HIS TRUSTY TWO-STROKE. FOR 2006 HE'LL MOUNT A FULL ASSAULT ON THE AMP'D MOBILE AMA SUPERCROSS SERIES WITH HIS NEWLY NAMED SOBE/SAMSUNG HONDA TEAM BEHIND HIM.

Words and photo by Steve Cox

DBR: Every time I talk to you I want to know if this is your last year or not. You've always said that you'll keep racing as long as it's fun. Is that still the plan?

MR: "This is probably my last year. What I'm kind of feeling is that I want to basically run the first five races and if I can't match the leaders' pace then for me it's not as fun as it should be or could be. So I'll run the first five races with an open mind and if I'm getting smoked obviously by the end of the year it's probably not going to be as fun as I want it to be so I'll probably be done. But, you know, it's hard. It's not all bad but it just sucks getting beat."

DBR: It seems weird from the outside that, in what could be your last supercross season, you've ditched the two-stroke in favour of the CRF450R.

MR: "I actually rode the Nationals in '02 on a 450 but that was a long time ago – the bike has come a long way since then. I went to the US Open [on a two-stroke] and I felt pretty good before I went there and I wasn't near where I needed to be. So, when I left the US Open, I knew I had to do something so I figured I'd at least try it. It took me a while. I took my time and worked on it and now I feel pretty good so I'm looking forward to Anaheim."

DBR: I know you're notoriously picky with your two-strokes over jetting and other set-up issues. How was the 450 different to set up for you?

MR: "Actually, Mitch Payton at Pro Circuit did my motors this year – I told him what I wanted and we tried three things and by the third thing I had it. It was pretty easy."

DBR: And all of a sudden everyone is on a four-stroke...

MR: "Yeah. I thought for sure I was going to be the 250 guy but after the US Open I

had my 250 about as good as I could get it and I still got smoked so I said 'what the heck – at least I'll ride what they ride'. I wanted to try it and if I thought I could be better on it I would switch and if not I would go back to the 250. But I think I'm a better rider on it."

DBR: So does it make you wish you'd switched to a four-stroke a couple of years ago?

MR: "You know what? Maybe. But I had a more open mind this year than I probably would've in the past. The first almost two months I was still pro-two-stroke. But I just kept putting the time in and finally I did the comparison and I was faster on a per-lap basis on the two-stroke but it was easier for me to do fast laps on the four-stroke. So I couldn't match that on the two-stroke. I'm at the point now where I'm just as fast on the four-stroke and more consistent too."

DBR: It looks like the style of racing a four-stroke is much different. You can't seem to push a four-stroke as hard – and charge as hard – as you could on 250s so the saying 'slow down to go faster' really means something on the four-strokes.

MR: "I would have to say that the biggest weakness of the four-stroke is stopping the thing. The one thing I felt really good about on a two-stroke was that I could charge the corner, throw the brakes on and hit the rut with good speed. Every time I tried to match that with a four-stroke I was in the other lane because I couldn't stop the thing. The momentum and the smooth acceleration are hard to match coming out of the corners but they're certainly at a disadvantage going into the corners."

"The biggest thing is making sure that you don't get a little too excited for too long down the straightaway. Those things aren't necessarily faster but they're so much harder to stop. The place where the four-stroke shines is that you're able to carry momentum really easily and the motor is always there. But it's hard to stop."

DBR: We may have another mudder at Anaheim – what are you thinking heading in?

MR: "I'm pretty open at this point. Obviously, my goal is to win and it almost happened last year but I just want to go in there and be faster than I was last year and race with the top pack. That's what I'm realistically hoping to do."

DBR: Do you foresee any issues actually racing the four-stroke compared to just testing and putting in fast laps?

MR: "Maybe. Like I said, you don't want to get excited on it – and racing promotes that for sure – but I'm pretty confident that I'll be able to keep it contained and ride it the way it should be ridden."

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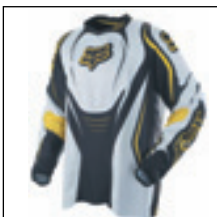
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